

# SPIRITUAL



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## **The Christian Intellect**

**George H. Tavard, A.A.**

**Mary Daly**

**Dr. Henry G. Fairbanks**

**Fr. Denis, O.C.D.**

**Mary Stack McNiff**

**Dorothy Dohen**

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# SPIRITUAL LIFE

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FATHER WILLIAM OF THE INFANT JESUS, O.C.D., Editor

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# The Christian Intellect:

WE ALMOST entitled this issue of SPIRITUAL LIFE the *Christian Intellectual*, but we thought better of it. Webster's latest dictionary is vague about this anomalous title, its definitions of intellectual ranging from "fond of and given to learning and thinking" to "having a capacity for the higher forms of knowledge and thought" to simply "a person who does intellectual work."

And we know from our own recent experiences of reading and discussion that the term "intellectual" is fraught with unfortunate equivocation.

Not all of our readers are inclined or obliged to be intellectuals; but every one of them is inclined and obliged to develop a *Christian Intellect*.

This means, ultimately, "to put on the mind of Christ," to come to think, love, and act like Christ in regard to His Father and His Father's business in the world. It means the highest pitch of awareness of God and ultimate concern about His world — the world He has given us to heal, restore, and perfect.

Such an alert and enlivened intellect is not easily come by. It takes more than a dutiful compliance to the law and an easy frequentation of the sacraments. It demands a highly personal, positive exploration into God and into the mystery of Christ — Christ incarnate, in the flesh, in humanity, in the world.

This calls for a vital kind of intellectual program, involving basically, whatever will exercise the theological virtue of faith (which is rooted in the intellect), stirring it up into a strong habit of mind that really shapes a man's thinking and governs his life.

A program such as this will comprise especially:

1. Thinking
2. Discriminating Reading
3. Discussion
4. Mental Prayer
5. Practice of the Presence of God

This is the way to develop the *Christian Intellect*. The result is what we mean by an authentic intellectual.

FATHER WILLIAM, O.C.D.

*Father Tavad, author of The Church, The Layman, and The Modern World, a sequel to his The Catholic Approach to Protestantism, is French-born, but has spent the last few years in America. His presence here has heightened and broadened our theological perspective considerably.*

# The Intellect and the Spiritual Life

Father George H. Tavad, A.A.

## I

GOD speaks in Revelation. Yet He has already spoken in creation. This provides the basic charter for the religious dimension of the intellectual life. The knowledge of this world opens the possibility of a remote acquaintance with God. "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen — His everlasting power also and divinity — being understood through the things that are made." (Romans, 1:20)

It is true that the language of God in nature has been obscured by sin. Through the fall of man it has become an ambiguous medium. It can be understood, or misunderstood. In our daily experience we deal with creation as though it were an absolute, or we make it relative only to our own selves. In both cases this is sin. Sin has all but totally darkened the transparency of natural forms. But not completely. There remains a ground out of which the natural religions grow. The knowledge of this world leaves an aftertaste of dissatisfaction. It points to a transcendent element which it cannot reveal. Nature thus awakens in us a sense of mystery. Philosophy formulates it, or explains it away. Pagan religions try to discover a guiding thread through it. As for science, it has systematically made abstraction of that element. This has rendered more objective its methodical survey of the universe. To superficial minds it has also given the impression that men could do away with the mystery of creation.



In spite of paganism, philosophy, and science, Pilate's question remains: "What is truth?" (John, 18:34) Various definitions have been given in answer. Truth is "the identity of a thing with itself," or "the correspondence between a knowing mind and a known object," or "the correspondence of thought and language." Ultimately these definitions would be meaningless if, at the bottom of them all, there did not lie a strictly religious concept: truth is the fidelity of creation to God's creative purpose. Things or words are true, because first they are true *to* God. Truth in this sense implies the presence of the creating Power to that which He creates. Awareness of this is an implicitly religious act. For Christians such a correspondence is embodied in the Savior, who is "the way, the truth, and the life." (John, 14:6) Christ is truth. Every element of truth anywhere implies a relation to Christ. This is why St. John could write: "He who does the truth comes to the light that his deeds may be made manifest, for they have been performed in God." (John, 3:21) The Catholic tradition has always understood that, as the Ambrosiaster expressed it in the fifth century, "whatever truth is said by any man is said by the Holy Spirit." (P.L., 17, 245)

We find here the principle of the Christian intellectual life. The truth, that Christ is, "shall make" us "free." (John, 8:32) The intellect has been redeemed.

That there is a redemption of the intellect came up in the controversies of the early Church. The bishops of the third and fourth centuries were not intellectuals in our sense of the expression. They were not interested in the claims of a supposedly autonomous human culture. They were concerned with the Incarnation and with the principle of faith that Christ *assumed* all men, save sin. This is why they proclaimed that, in Christ, the intellectual function was ensured by a created human soul, and not directly by the divinity. Christ had a "psychè" just as we have. This means that man's intellect is not out of the realm of redemption; it is within. The mind of a man has a role to play in his salvation and sanctification.

Later theologians also emphasized this. The medieval schoolmen insisted on the intellectual aspect of faith: faith, the fundamental virtue of Christian life, is an *assent*. They were not anxious to

rationalize it, to stress its intellectual function at the expense of the trust which faith implies. They knew that faith, in the Catholic sense, is no glorified philosophical opinion. It entails a "night," a groping in the dark. It is the humble acceptance of a person — Christ — from whom everything proceeds in our natural and supernatural life. Faith implies nonetheless an intellectual agreement to the formulas in which the Church has traditionally expressed the event of the Incarnation. To accept Baptism is not only to repent and to ask admittance into the Church. It is also to accept the Creed as an authoritative formulation of doctrine requiring a total intellectual assent.

The Protestant Reformers emphasized other aspects of faith. Yet even they did not deny, despite some of their later followers, its intellectual content. Their faith was a confidence in our salvation by Christ. But the sign that we do share this confidence was precisely the fact that we accept the credal formulation of Christianity. Later liberal Protestants may have overlooked this point. Yet the Reformers were, here, faithful to the Catholic tradition: the articles of the Creed were for them the hallmark of the Christian assent. Admittedly, they went to an excess in denying the validity of intellectual effort in matters of faith. Even at this point, however, their intention was positive: they wanted to stress the totally new aspects of the intellect that Christ has redeemed. It is re-born. The categories of the human intellect before grace, in sin, can no longer apply. In this the Protestants also were right. For a Christian transformation of the human intellect has actually taken place.

## II

The Christian transformation of knowledge starts with the Bible. God reveals Himself through the words which He spoke through the Prophets and through His Incarnate Son. Whether they are now being spoken or written down in the past, these words require a response. But none can understand the words of God, unless it be in the Holy Spirit. "No one knows who the Son is, except the Father, and who the Father is, except the Son, and him to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him." (Luke, 10:22) When Peter proclaimed that Jesus was indeed the Christ, he was told:



"Flesh and blood has not revealed this to thee." (Matthew, 16:17) Flesh and blood, that is, the purely human intellect, is at a loss facing the One who is "a stumbling-block to the Jews, foolishness to Gentiles." (I Corinthians, 1:23) The language of Revelation can be grasped only in the Spirit. The Redemption of the intellect consists precisely in the illumination, by the Spirit, of what we read or hear.

The old masters of the spiritual life were aware of this. It is not because there were few other books of an "inspirational" nature that St. Benedict enjoined his monks to read the Bible daily. This *lectio divina* is a meditative reading of the Old and the New Testaments. From the time of the desert Fathers all through the Middle Ages it remained the staple spiritual nurture. Not, again, because there was nothing else. Rather, in the words of St. Bonaventure, "it is better to hold the truth than a reflection of it." (*Collationes in Hexaëmeron*, XVII, 25) Christians have spoken about God. But what they have said is itself grounded in the words of God. The way to perfection started at that moment when God spoke to man and gave man the grace to answer. Both the challenge and the response are embodied in Holy Writ. This will therefore be the starting point of spiritual elevation. It will be more than a starting point. Grace orients toward sanctity. Yet grace also sustains us all the time and brings us nearer the goal. Likewise, Christian spirituality begins with "divine reading"; and it continues and progresses with it. The degrees of spiritual life correspond to successive readings of the Bible.

This could be shown by a study of the monastic reforms at various periods. Whether it was St. Benedict in the sixth century, St. Bernard in the twelfth, St. Francis in the thirteenth, or St. John of the Cross in the sixteenth, they all required of their followers a strict fidelity to the divine reading of the Bible. The realism of the Bible demands a stripping of man-made conceptions. This has made monastic spirituality extremely Christ-centered. For the whole point of the *lectio divina* is that, through the Bible, Christ speaks to the soul.

### III

In the traditional "divine reading," the Bible has several senses.



Not that one passage may mean contradictory things. Far from it. The plural sense of the Bible simply derives from an obvious fact. As a Christian progresses in the spiritual life, he understands the things of Christ better; his religious sensitivity acquires more and more delicacy; he therefore gradually perceives depths of meaning in the words of God of which he was not aware before. The literal sense of Scripture is always true. It records the history of the Chosen People, the events of the Incarnation, and the beginnings of the Church. Yet whereas all Scripture is *inspired*, not everything in it is *revealed*. Not therefore every verse of Holy Writ, taken literally, expresses the faith. "Fundamentalists" believe that it does. This fallacy is rampant in the most conservative Protestant churches of America and is not infrequent among Catholics of low culture. But the true attitude to Scripture is far from this literalism. The Christian intellect has to discern, in the "divine reading," the passages that express more than a mere record of facts. A reader with a truly active faith will focus his attention on the meaning of faith as the Old and the New Testaments present it. His hope likewise will perceive the scriptural expression of the Christian hope. And Christian love also will enlighten the passages that express love.

This corresponds to the three spiritual meanings of the Bible as explained in the Middle Ages: the allegorical (faith), the anagogical (hope) and the moral sense (love). Those senses represent three parallel functions of the redeemed intellect. The so-called *three ways* of spiritual life are not clear-cut, successive stages on the road to God. They unfold in this threefold reading of Scripture. Under the guidance of hope, Scripture reading purges us from man-made delusions ("purgation"); in the light of faith it illuminates the soul with a reflection of God's own radiance ("illumination"); in the unction of love it unites to God's own love ("union"). Each time we listen to God with hope, faith, and love, we are purified, enlightened, and made closer friends with God. To read and to listen, even with the assistance of the theological virtues, are distinctly intellectual operations. The Christian intellect thus reaches an understanding of the words of God which is closed to the uninterested or hostile agnostic. It was only late in the history of spirituality that the *three ways* were understood to be successive

stages in the formation of the will: a phase of renunciation of evil, one of holy desires and efforts, one of transformation into perfect union. This voluntarism in spirituality has corresponded with the theological decay of the late Middle Ages. Yet even then the greatest spiritual writers have returned to an intellectual, rather than voluntaristic, conception of spiritual progress. The *Exercises* of St. Ignatius record an experience of the knowledge of Christ; they are not a technique of spiritual will-power.

The Bible does not furnish the tools of the Christian intellect alone. Besides the book of Holy Scripture we have been given the book of material creation and the book of spiritual creation: the world around us, and the soul. God speaks in all three. Yet the book of Scripture must always prevail. Others are read in its light, whether it is the two books of nature and of man, or books of human authorship.

The intellect that begins to know God in the Scriptures is in a position to understand nature and man better. He now has a frame of reference which throws light on the meaning of nature and of man. Knowledge of this world is no longer an all-sufficient goal. Nature ceases to be an obstacle to overcome or an alien territory to conquer. It is a friend. It reflects the face of God. Man is no longer a stranger to avoid or to dominate. He is a living image of Christ, an epitome of the potentialities of Christian life, an embodiment of an idea of God for whose fulfillment the Word took flesh and dwelt among us. The old theology of the "image of God" in the soul and of the "traces of God" in nature expressed in intellectual terms the fact that Redemption makes a new reading of nature and of man possible. In this new reading they become indispensable allies on our pilgrimage to God.

Then nature itself speaks of Christ. The Franciscan view of nature as a scale that elevates to God betrays no romanticism. It is Christology at the point where knowledge of Christ illumines our knowledge of the world. The Incarnation has raised creation to a higher status. The universe is now the stage of the advent of the Son among men. As it was a silent witness of the life of Christ on earth, creation is now a silent witness of the life of His Mystical Body. Witness implies participation. A Christian mind which has perceived the sense of the Incarnation knows this to be



the primary meaning of nature today. The presence of Christ in Palestine and His continuing presence in the Church have endowed creation with a properly sacramental value, which the soul, attuned to Christian realities, may discern. The seven sacraments are no isolated instances of such a sanctification of matter. They rather point to the latent sacramentality of nature in general. This latency gives way to actuality in the case of the sacraments of faith. Yet outside of them also the Christian mind may easily pierce through the veil of appearances. It reads the underlying meaning: the subservience of all things to Him before whom "every knee shall bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth." (Philippians, 2:10)

This Christian understanding of the world cannot rest satisfied with a passing glance at the universe. It must be admitted that the faithful are tempted to scoff at the passion for knowledge which characterizes intellectuals. Scientific research and its hypothetical results do not bear comparison with a spiritual knowledge of creation in the light of faith. Catholics, more than Protestants, are prone to adopt this "superior" attitude. For they are conscious that their own culture was already full grown before the scientific mind was born. Yet a Catholic culture leading to contempt for intellectual achievements only shows that it is not Catholic enough. The Christian use of the intellect must make room for techniques of investigation. There is no Christian technique. Yet there is a vision of the place of science in a total world outlook which is perceptible only to men who are both Christians and scholars. That theology is, in the customary phrase, "queen of sciences," does not imply that she should stand aloof like an unapproachable sovereign. On the contrary, she needs the services of the sciences. In this spirit, St. Bonaventure could boldly describe the Christian relevancy of geometry as a prolonged, patient commentary on the four angles of the Cross of Christ.

Our present century ought to be favorable to this brotherhood of faith and science. For the current emphasis on psychology and sociology has renewed interest in man as a field of investigation. And man is much closer an image of God than nature is. If the Church's mystical tradition has not been afraid of comparing divine love to human love, it would seem that the Christian understanding of man should not now fight shy of depth psychology. Psycho-

analysts have emphasized aspects of the soul of which mystical authors have long been aware. This field remains largely unexplored by modern Catholics. Yet it obviously provides a standpoint from which a Christian reading of the book of the soul may be developed today.

#### IV

We may note at this point that there are two diverging views of the Christian function of the intellect. This is at the source of a cleavage between Catholic intellectuals who prefer the one or the other.

A first conception is enthusiastic for the faith and also sure of the possibilities of reason. The sciences are not neglected. They are studied. Since faith is superior to them, one attempts to place scholarship at the service of the Church. As a result, human knowledge, whether it is philosophical or scientific, is indulged in and encouraged, but only insofar as it serves the Catholic faith. In other words, human scholarship receives an *apologetic* function. Its subservience to faith is seen here: the purpose of study is not knowledge as such, but the defense of the Church. There is no need to remark on the popularity of this conception. It underlies many a course of philosophy in many a Catholic college.

A few decades ago, "concordism" between the Bible and paleontology was widely accepted. The Bible was supposed to support scientific theories on the origin of man. This has now been abandoned. Yet there still lingers a similar concordism between faith and Aristotelian philosophy on the one hand, and faith and various sciences on the other.<sup>1</sup> It needs saying, however, that such a view does justice neither to faith nor to science. It does not respect human knowledge. For it contradicts the first principle of objective research: never to take the conclusion for granted. This attitude starts from the principle that the purely natural exercise of human logic favors, if it does not prove, faith. The scientific conclusion is then colored by a non-scientific assumption. It follows that such an

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<sup>1</sup> One should evidently make a distinction between two kinds of Aristotelianism. An Aristotelian philosophy can be as valid and vital as any other today, if it is adopted as a result of serious philosophical reflexion. But it can be entirely petrified, if it is only a system of formal categories. The correspondence between the latter and faith is no better than a pseudo-scientific "concordism."



apologetic use of science turns out to be non-scientific. This itself is detrimental to faith. For a faith that needs upholding at the cost of objective research is a faith that is unsure of itself.

The traditional subservience of human knowledge to faith is to be achieved in a very different way. In his *Itinerary of the Soul to God*, St. Bonaventure advised a study of the sciences and philosophy as a preparation of the soul to contemplation. This *contemplative* function of knowledge has nothing common with the above mentioned apologetic use of it. Scholarly research in all fields aims at the contemplation of creation. A loving wonder at the works of God places the soul in a receptive attitude which favors the welcome of the graces of supernatural contemplation. Openness is a prerequisite of scholarship. Respect for the datum marks the scientific mind. Openness, humility before God's gifts, and the renunciation of pre-conceptions are also required by Christian contemplation. This does not make scholarship a form of mysticism. It only means that intellectual disciplines may be preliminary to supernatural graces. Respect of science for its own worth, of knowledge for its own sake, is part and parcel of a sound Christian behavior. The quest for philosophical or scientific knowledge in their most unprejudiced methods lays the ground for the reception of a knowledge of another order, whose giving lies in the gracious initiative of God. In one of her essays Simone Weil discovered the usefulness of study in that it fosters a form of attention which is essential to prayer.<sup>2</sup> The most orthodox representatives of the mystical tradition had already made similar remarks.

One may wish that Catholic educators were aware of the vista thus opened. From this point of view, their vocation is to prepare the way of the Lord, to be John the Baptist before the mystical coming of the Word into the soul. And in order to fulfill this role they must be as scientifically honest as possible.

In their justified contempt for the apologetic use of science, there are scholars who come to despair of the Church. No doubt the clergy could be better prepared than it now is to grasp the requirements or even the relevance of scholarship. Yet the frequent failure of the clergy does not absolve scholarly laymen of responsibility.

<sup>2</sup> "Reflections on the right use of school studies with a view to the love of God," in *Waiting on God*, pp. 51-59.

If priests have sometimes twisted science or philosophy into apologetics, it is partly because scholars have also forgotten the properly contemplative function of intellectual activity.

Scholarly research has thus a twofold role in Christian spirituality. In the first place it provides a more accurate knowledge of the created world, from which men may raise their minds to a more fervent praise of the Creator. In the second, the very rigidity of its methodical requirements implies a self-renunciation which may, God willing, place the soul in a more receptive attitude before God.

## V

All human knowledge, understood in the light of faith, speaks of Christ. Yet, like Scripture itself, science may be read at several levels. To the agnostic, Scripture speaks of a man called Jesus who made unusual claims. To the believer, it speaks of the Word made flesh for our salvation. To the former, science describes or investigates man in and for himself. To the latter, it speaks of man and nature as creatures and images of God, enhanced by the presence of Christ in the flesh. Yet not all the faithful hear Christ in the same way.

The knowledge of Christ and His works that may be acquired in this life passes through three stages.

There is Christ *known as others describe Him*. A first way of reading Scripture sees Him as somebody who was known to others. Likewise, a student who is not far advanced knows about science only by hearsay. This sort of knowledge of Christ is conveyed by many sermons and books. It is an elementary, indispensable starting point. "Faith comes by hearsay," according to St. Paul. (Romans, 10:17) Yet a knowledge which is only second-hand is not a real knowledge. It is not the knowledge of the scholar, of the man who has experienced the discovery of new horizons. It is that of the amateur who reads about scholarship without plunging into it himself. Likewise, the faith acquired by hearsay has to grow through experience.

There is therefore a second degree of knowledge: Christ *known personally according to the flesh*. This follows the practice of Christian life and contact with Christ in the sacraments. The promise made in the Gospel of St. John comes true: "If some one loves me



he will keep my word and will be loved of my Father, and we will come to him and make our dwelling in him." (John, 14:23) We then become progressively aware of all the dimensions of the Incarnation. The Christ in the flesh: this connotes, besides the Incarnation as the central historical event, the entire life of the Church. It includes man's slow discovery of the material structure of the universe. The whole intellect is then focused on the Incarnation. Intellectual activities write a commentary on the presence of Christ. This search for Him is never over. For one cannot exhaust the depth of the creative and redemptive wisdom of God.

This is where human sciences and arts should fall into place: they contribute to man's contemplation of the innumerable aspects of the Kingship of Christ. No intellectual discipline should be neglected. For each has a message to bring. It is true that no man, however great a genius, can master all sciences. But this is not the point. The point is that all who do master a part, however small or however eccentric, of human scholarship, must find their mansion in the Church of the Word Incarnate. Then only can the Church fulfill her function of making all sections of the universe participate in her worship: human wisdom becomes a collective heirloom of the Mystical Body.

It is evident that a Catholicism which would not inspire theologians or artists or scientists could not be taken very seriously. Not only its impact on society would be near to nil; but as the depth and earnestness of its conviction would lie open to doubt, its impact on the soul would also be questionable. This obviously raises legitimate queries as to the present readiness of the Church to become the home of intellectuals. That the Church as such is ready does not come into question. But the Church as such is a vision of faith. As the Church however looks to interested outsiders, the intellectual achievements of her members give the pulse of her readiness to preach her message to intellectuals. Catholics in America do not yet show this sort of preparedness. The impression can then be conveyed that there is no room for intellectuals in the Church. Those who train potential scholars in Universities have therefore a serious examination of conscience to make. The collective intellectual level of the Church in America is at stake there. The personal commitment of Catholics to Christ is also crucial:

without an intellectual growth in the knowledge of Christ and His works, the practice of religion runs the danger of becoming either merely external or else largely emotional.

In the intellectual endeavors thus envisaged, grace is at work. It is grace using the resources of men in their natural endowments and those of Christians in the supernatural gift of faith. This is always needed. No time ever comes when one may renounce natural reason and the wisdom of faith. Yet there may dawn a day when the limits of this knowledge of Christ in faith and intelligence are made, as it were, painfully and yet delightfully tangible. This does not result from human efforts. It is entirely due to God's gift. At such a time one perceives a new knowledge of Christ, *Christ according to His Spirit*, or, as Venerable Mary of the Incarnation says it, "in a relationship of spirit to spirit."

St. Thomas Aquinas had reached this point when he declared his previous works, the labor of a lifetime, to be straw in comparison. Then Christ makes Himself known so intimately that His human nature is experientially perceived as mediating between the Word and mankind. A medium withdraws once it has fulfilled its appointed task. This is why, according to all Catholic mystics, the mediation of Christ in the spiritual life climaxes in man's entrance into the Holy of Holies: in a supernatural contemplation of the three divine Persons in their inner life. Renunciation of the knowledge of this world consistently follows. For what good can one find in created things which is not found in the eternal source of all good? Then, according to St. Bonaventure, "If you seek to know how this takes place, question grace, not philosophy; love, not intelligence; the longing of prayer, not the effort of study; the bridegroom, not the teacher; God, not man; obscurity, not clarity; not light, but a flame which totally inflames and carries into God through the unctions of ecstasy and through embracing loves."<sup>3</sup> The created universe recedes. It is still present to the mind, but only insofar as it is seen in the light of its eternal *ground*, in the Divine Image of which the world is but a mirror. The soul still understands and knows, but she does so through love rather than through reason. The suggestive phrase of William of St. Thierry comes true: "Love itself is intellection."

<sup>3</sup> *Itinerary of the Soul to God*, ch. 7, n. 6.

Mystics have renounced philosophy, science, art, scholarship. Yet they have done so after exhausting them. St. Thomas could call his *Summa* a bit of straw, for he himself had composed it. St. Bonaventure could tell the old peasant woman that she could be a greater saint than many a doctor in theology, for he himself was a doctor in theology. To argue from the detachment of contemplation to an opposition between spiritual life and intellectual research would undercut contemplation. For it would take away the years of spiritual search which prepare it. Directors of conscience know as an elementary principle that souls must not be weaned from ordinary intellectual processes before the Spirit Himself takes matters in hand. To renounce the intellect too soon would leave them in a void. It would favor an "angelism" which is often at the root of the worst perversions.

### Conclusion

The long history of the Church has known ages that were more favorable than others to the development of intellectual activities. Influence of the secular environment is obviously predominant here. Yet in any age whatever, until recently it has been the Church which has protected and promoted the efforts of intellectuals. The Church has been the mother of European art and culture. This was not through worldliness. It was because the Catholic conception of Christianity requires a transformation of the intellect in the light of faith. This is why artists, writers, thinkers have flourished in the Church. The periods of high intellectual activity in the Church have usually coincided with those of great spiritual development.

Things have now apparently changed. In many parts of the world, and especially in the New Continent, scholarship comes to fruition outside rather than inside of the Church. As a result, many Catholics comes to think that culture, if not intelligence, is detrimental to spiritual life, or, alternatively, that faith can replace scholarship. But thus to condemn the intellect without having oneself undergone the labors of intellectual research is insolent arrogance. Furthermore, as we have seen, the opposition thus established is entirely fallacious. Yet we run here into an astonishing fact: Catholic education, even on the higher levels, does not aim at



making scholars. It seems satisfied with developing a defensive reaction to modern scholarship.

Spiritual life naturally suffers as a consequence. Priests have to cater to the needs of men who have little intellectual activity. They, therefore, appeal to the emotions rather than to intelligence. Emotions, however, far from helping, hinder the spiritual life. In spiritual development they have to be forsaken much sooner than reasoning. By nurturing an emotional religion, sermons thus place obstacles in the way of our growth in faith. They favor a way of worship which stresses sentimental attachment to devotional practices rather than the encounter with the Lord in the nudity of faith. Yet the purification and simplification of the will, the memory and the intellect, which are essential to spiritual adulthood, take place in the nudity of faith. We thus turn around in a vicious circle. Because our people are not intellectuals, we fight shy of appealing to the intellect. As no religion can thrive in a vacuum, we then call on sentiment. And sentiment in turn tends to replace faith, thus ruining every possibility of developing a Christian intellect and an intellectually solid spiritual life. The claim may of course be made that priests who distrust the intellect teach a religion of will-power. But the will cannot be unmotivated. It will seek for strength and support either in the intellect or in the emotions.

We are thus back in our dilemma. There is only one way out. If Catholic life is to reach the spiritual heights to which it is normally called, one must nurture a number of previous conditions of interior growth. Not least of these is an encouragement of the intellect and a pursuit of intellectual activities.

*The author is a professor of Theology at Cushing College, Boston, Mass.*

# Theology and Holiness

Mary Daly

MOST people would grant that there is some sort of connection between the two realities signified in the title of this article. They both involve a relation between God and man. What many do not understand is that there is a deep and vital relationship between the two; theology is a means to growth in holiness. Unfortunately it is often underrated as a means.

The skeptic with just a hint of suspicion in his voice wryly comments: "Well, what about the Curé of Ars? He barely scraped through the seminary, but he seems to have made out better than many theologians. And there are scores of other saints who had even less learning than he."

Of course, there have been great non-theologian saints, but this is quite beside the point. It manifests the power and mercy of God, not the uselessness of theology. None has been a saint *because* he was not learned. But if the skeptic misses the point, his first cousin the simplicist, or anti-intellectualist, hits it — only from the wrong side. He insinuates that theology and holiness are in some indefinable way hostile to each other. "Too much knowledge makes a person proud, focuses his attention upon himself," he says. "Religion, after all, is a matter of love. It would be better to spend the time doing good rather than to worry over theological subtleties."

There is, of course, an element of truth in what the anti-intellectualist says. Knowledge can be an occasion of pride; but true knowledge should be an incentive to humility. Charity is truly the greatest of the virtues, but knowledge, as experience shows, is a cause of love.

*Personal Perfection*

This brings us back to the point, which is precisely: How does theology influence growth in holiness? There is no simple answer, but we can grasp something of the truth by focusing upon the meaning of the words themselves. Since holiness is the goal, it might well be our first consideration; to be holy is to be supernaturally ordered to God. Anyone in the state of sanctifying grace, then, is in a real sense holy. He possesses, moreover, the theological and moral virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. But here is a vital point: sanctifying grace and the virtues are not exactly "things"; they are qualities of that special type called "habits." Sanctifying grace, since it is a habit of well-being in the soul, causes a person to exist in a new way, enables him to live on a supernatural level. The virtues, which are operative habits, elevate the powers of the soul so that they can perform supernatural acts commensurate with the life of sanctifying grace.

Holiness, then, involves the possession of new qualities or habits. An important point to grasp about habits is that they are not static, inert "things." They can grow indefinitely, as the knowledge of physics grew in Einstein, for example. But the comparison fails, for the development of the spiritual life of a Christian can be an indescribably more expansive thing than Einstein's scientific development, since it involves the fulfillment of a freely given supernatural capacity.

Our goal, then, is not simply to become holy; it is to become more holy. Growth in sanctity, moreover, is proportionate to increase in the virtue of charity. One is, in fact, holy to the extent that he has charity.

The second term whose meaning should be considered is theology, which may be defined as "the science of revealed truth." The habit of theology perfects the intellect and is acquired through human effort, whereas charity perfects the will and is infused directly by God with sanctifying grace. Considered as an operative habit, theology is not static, but vital; it may be possessed in varying degrees.

While theology and charity are distinct, we should not suppose that they are totally unrelated. The powers of intellect and will



themselves are most intimate companions. Common experience testifies to this. We desire only that which we know to be good, and we want it to the extent that it manifests to us the aspect of goodness. This is true in the case of created things which are the objects of our desires, defective though they may be. But there is an object of knowledge so utterly good as to preclude any defect whatever, a being overwhelmingly and dazzlingly desirable. It would seem that every step forward in knowledge of this being would make Him all the more irresistible. This is, in fact, what can and should happen when we study the science of God. If the effect is not attained, the fault is in us, not in the science.

To grasp more clearly the role of divine science in the spiritual life, we might examine it in relation to the stages of the human journey to God. St. Thomas describes growth in charity by way of an analogy with local motion. It is like a journey in which there is first withdrawal from one term, then approach to the other term, and finally rest in this goal.<sup>1</sup> Thus a person on his way to the Beatific Vision normally should pass through three stages. In the first stage, the beginner is occupied chiefly in avoiding sin and resisting his concupiscences. In the second stage, his principal pursuit is to aim at progress in virtue. Finally, when close to perfection, he focuses chiefly upon union with and enjoyment of God.

How can theological studies help the beginner to avoid sin? It can give him inspiration and courage. St. Paul says: "For whatever things have been written have been written for our instruction, that through the patience and consolation afforded by the Scriptures we may have hope."<sup>2</sup> And theology is, in the words of St. Irenaeus, "the opening of the seal of all that is there in the Scriptures."<sup>3</sup> Study also has an ascetic value which should not be underestimated. When one's attention is focused upon sublime subjects, he isn't likely to be absorbed in things of a baser nature. Finally, accurate knowledge of the principles of moral science can help a person to avoid pitfalls which might otherwise not be obvious.

<sup>1</sup> *Summa Theologica*, II-II, 24, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Romans 15:4.

<sup>3</sup> *Adversus Haereses*, 1, 4.

For those in the second and third stages, who are approaching perfection, knowledge of the virtues and gifts in a scientific way is helpful. They can also find matter for meditation in their study and at the same time have a safeguard against those errors which frequently beset people who read Sacred Scripture without having the tools which are useful, and sometimes necessary, to interpret it correctly.

### *Perfection of the Mystical Body*

While the study of theology is of immense value to the individual for his own spiritual life, it would be a narrow estimate of its influence to think of it in terms of isolated personal perfection. Personal perfection in the supernatural order is never an isolated affair, of course. If his study of Sacred Doctrine helps a person to become a saint, even though he never communicates his knowledge, it will, nevertheless, be indirectly affecting the life of the Mystical Body of which he is a living member. In a more direct and obvious way, however, the student of theology is enabled more perfectly to fulfill his function in the Mystical Body. As an adult Christian he has, by the character of Confirmation, been deputed to perform acts necessary in the spiritual combat with enemies of the faith. He must profess the faith by whatever words and deeds are required for the vindication and defense of the Church. By the sacrament of Confirmation he has been deputed a soldier of Christ on earth. By acquiring in some degree the science of theology he has equipped himself with the means to play a most effective role in the army of Christ.

Theology has from apostolic times been necessary for the holiness of the Church. While it is unlike the charisms in that it is a habit acquired by human effort which greatly benefits its possessor, theology resembles a charism in this respect: it enables its possessor to speak of divine truths in a manner required for the present needs of the faithful. The faithful have always needed to be taught Sacred Doctrine, of course. Today especially, however, the higher education of many exposes them to attack on subtle points of doctrine. The ordering of these millions of minds to God — the holiness of these minds — cannot be insured without the response of many to the words of the Book of Proverbs: "Study

wisdom, my son, and make my heart joyful, that thou mayest give an answer to him that reproacheth."<sup>4</sup> The wisdom which is theology, as St. Thomas says, is "necessary for the destruction of error, for without arguments this cannot be accomplished, and therefore it is necessary that the mode of this science be argumentative, both through authority and through reason."<sup>5</sup> To perform this theological function of defense of the faith, a person needs explicit knowledge of divine truths.

"A wise man instructeth his own people."<sup>6</sup> In our time there is a great need for trained men and women, religious and secular, who, bearing in mind that "there never will be in the Church a legitimate teaching authority of the laity withdrawn from the authority, guidance, and watchfulness of the legitimate teaching authority,"<sup>7</sup> are able to assist the hierarchy in bringing the Word of God to men. Today broad and deep knowledge of the physical and social sciences is being attained by large numbers and applied by them for the betterment or deterioration of society. Intellectuals of every type are seeking a world view which will put harmony into man's internal and external world. Is it not the time for modern theologians to show the way, to make Catholics in the academic professions and those called to public leadership more deeply aware of absolute truth? Theology in a sense sanctifies learning, for it orders it to God. Not until men's minds are lifted by and with the Word above earth will they be able to conquer the confusion of earth.

St. Thomas sees an interesting relation between the gift of wisdom and the seventh beatitude: "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God." The reason he assigns seems applicable also to theology. Since peace is the tranquillity of order, it belongs to wisdom, which sets all things in order, to make peace.<sup>8</sup> Theologians, since theology is a kind of wisdom, should be peacemakers, effecting "peace" among the sciences, that is, proper subordination of lesser ends to higher ones. In the practical realm, the reign of theology means the application of knowledge for the

<sup>4</sup> Proverbs 27:11.

<sup>5</sup> *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter the Lombard*, I, 1, 5.

<sup>6</sup> Ecclesiasticus 37:26.

<sup>7</sup> Pope Pius XII, address recorded in *NCWC News Bulletin*, June, 1954.

<sup>8</sup> *Summa Theologica*, II-II, 45, 6.



cause of peace in human society. Brought into focus by theology, all human knowledge and the activities following upon it would be effective in sanctifying the real members of the Mystical Body, and even potential members still remote from the Church.

### *Spiritual Life Enriches Doctrinal Life*

We have seen something of the role which theology can play in the life of individuals and of the Church. It remains to point out that the acquisition of doctrine is influenced by the spiritual life of the individual. The theological and moral virtues are, in fact, dispositions necessary for a vital and permanent habit of theology. Certainly, one could accept the principles of theology, the articles of faith, even though his faith were unformed by charity. Without charity he could explain and defend the faith, and reason from the principles of faith to true conclusions. There can be intellectual virtue without moral virtue. However, it would hardly seem reasonable to suppose that, without moral virtue, firm attention to divine things would be possible for a long period of time, since intellectual activity is impeded by the unruly movement of the lower powers. Pope Pius XII says in the encyclical *Humani Generis*:

Never has Christian philosophy denied the efficacy of good dispositions of soul for perceiving and embracing moral and religious truths. In fact, it has always been taught that the lack of these dispositions of good will can be the reason why intellect, influenced by the passions and evil inclinations, can be so obscured that it cannot see clearly.<sup>9</sup>

Grace in the soul, moreover, gives the theologian the ability to some extent to judge rightly of divine things through connaturality with them. John of St. Thomas describes connatural wisdom, or "knowing by the Spirit," as "knowing not from an illumination or speculation on the divine nature, but through a loving experience of union." . . . Thus, "the intellect is carried toward the object as something experienced, brought into agreement with it, as it were."<sup>10</sup> St. Thomas expresses it in this way: "In the attempt to arrive at some knowledge of God, the human mind is greatly assisted when its natural light is fortified by a new illumination: namely, the light of faith and that of the gifts of wisdom and understanding, by which the mind is elevated above itself in con-

<sup>9</sup> *Humani Generis*, p. 15.

<sup>10</sup> *The Gifts of the Holy Ghost*, trans. Hughes, pp. 127-128.

temptation, inasmuch as it knows God to be above anything which it naturally apprehends.”<sup>11</sup>

The practice of moral virtue, then removes impediments to the acquisition of Sacred Doctrine. The theological virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit cause a certain experiential union. It is hardly conceivable that without these aids, there would be profound advancement in Sacred Doctrine, or that with these helps there could fail to be a great influx of light upon all theological effort.

### Conclusion

The combination of sanctity and sacred science was perhaps realized most fully in the life of the Angelic Doctor. Placing the supreme fulfillment of life in an act of the intellect, and seeing all other things as good only insofar as they are conducive to this end, Thomas Aquinas, saint and theologian, lived and taught the sublime paradox of a spirituality synonymous with intellectualism. Exalting power of mind in itself, he taught that in God, *to be* is the very act of His intellect. So high is the Thomistic ideal of mind, that the ultimate end and supreme happiness of man is viewed as an essentially intellectual vision of the Divine Essence. Yet St. Thomas had no illusion about the mental capacity of man, who possesses the smallest degree of intellectual power.

Here then is the paradox. The doctor of theology who held mind supreme was by his wisdom driven to discount speculation, for this is only “a kind of beginning of perfect bliss, which consists in the contemplation of truth.”<sup>12</sup> But it was by a life expended largely in theological effort that St. Thomas achieved that degree of contemplation which bade him close the unfinished *Summa*. Far from being a deprecation of theology, his renunciation is his supreme exaltation of it. Similitude to God attained through prayer and study had fructified in a friendship which left no time for study. Through “the desire of wisdom which bringeth to the everlasting kingdom,” St. Thomas had overtaken the kingdom. Then he could say, “All I have written appears to me as so much straw.” These words imply all that can be said of the union of theology and holiness.

<sup>11</sup> *Commentary on the De Trinitate of Boethius*, I, 2, c.

<sup>12</sup> *Summa Theologica*, I-II, 57, 1, ad 2.

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## No Scholarship for Christ

*Dr. Henry G. Fairbanks*

THE fairy-godmothers who used to confine their magical wands to flipping the pages of Grimm and Andersen have stepped right out of fiction and made an impressive debut on the national scholarship scene. One might conceivably debate the imbalance of awards to rival areas of the sciences and humanities; but no one can dispute the number and generosity of the grants. Merely enumerating today's educational opportunities produces something akin to a Whitmanesque catalog of American greatness or a new Litany of the Saints—National Merit, National Science, Shell Oil, G.E., Dupont, and "*et Cetera, et Cetera*" intoned with the musical inflections of the King of Siam. The academic manna has rained so plentifully on this Promised Land that President Gresham of Bethany College, West Virginia, can cite the case of one college-bound Cinderella who amassed \$25,000 in scholarship offers. (A new version of the wardrobe-worried mademoiselle who had so many dresses she did not know what to wear.) Such prodigality, however, makes one guiltily recall the contrasting reception accorded the Child Christ's display of talents in the presence of the Temple doctors.

The life of Christ is so full of tragic ironies that the artist of genius shrinks from its challenge. Lines like "He came unto His own and His own received Him not" mock the dramatist who would do them justice. A theme unwinds from the lowliness of the manger to the exaltation of the cross which few dare weave into the seamless texture of what, without triteness, can still be called "The Greatest Story Ever Told." Perhaps the evangelists did their



job so well that writers subsequently reject such attempts as presumptuous. Perhaps the effulgence of Divine Life is wisely refracted in the fragmentary glimpses tolerable by mortal sight. Even the "homely" Gospel of the Feast of the Holy Family, no less than the mystery of the Incarnation or the tragedy of Calvary, has its own throbbing irony.

And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at His wisdom and His answers. . . . And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and was subject to them. . . . And Jesus advanced in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and men. — Luke 2:46–52.

It is not the edification of God going down to Nazareth to submit to the simple authority of Mary and Joseph. It is not the heart-choking gasp felt personally by every parent when Mary and Joseph fear that they have lost their child and charge. This immediacy, which goes far to establish the authenticity and artistry of St. Luke, has gripped congregations more firmly than the head-lock with which preaching commentators have captivated them. We have read many interpretations of the Child Christ astounding the Temple doctors — some impelled, perhaps, by a vindictive anti-intellectualism which delights in deflating professorial pretension. But I do not recall anyone's having observed that, notwithstanding the impression which the boy Jesus made upon them, no one of these pundits concerned himself with the future of that dazzling intelligence. Apparently, with less interest than the curiosity of TV quiz audiences and with less involvement than talent scouts for the Ivy League, the doctors made no protest against consigning this Mind to Nazareth, as inept a nursery for culture as a hamlet in the Great Smokies.

Of course, not even Nazareth could suffocate the Light of the World; and that early education in the humble home is itself instructive of parental primacy in the responsibilities of education. But the magisterium of the teaching Christ which moved auditors later during the public life to exclaim "This man speaks with authority" was already manifest that day in the Temple. Yet no discerning rabbi enveloped this brilliant Boy with the mantle of protective patronage. Christ had many rejections, beginning with

the "No Vacancy" sign on the inn at Bethlehem; but the innkeeper protested more convincingly than the teachers who, in 1959, are still complaining of hereditary anemia in the academic system. They offered the first cup of gall to Christ that day when they offered Him no scholarship.

To be sure, the Mind which grew in wisdom, age, and grace in Nazareth did not suffer impairment because of a denial which could stunt an ordinary mind and pervert its promise. But this fact, unknown to the Temple doctors when He astonished them by His answers, does not relieve them of the charge of callousness in high places where it operates with treasonable irresponsibility. To them He was a phenomenally quick youngster. Yet they let Him fall back into the void of obscurity from which He had meteorically blazed a path of brilliance. No evidence exists in the Gospels that the scholars who saw this star in their midst disturbed their routine by anything so arduous as a Magi's worshipful journey. No legend in "The Gospel of Jesus" or other apocrypha relates their attempt to recover and foster the rare talent of this second epiphany.

It is too charitable to pass off with mouthing "Men have often entertained angels unawares." Average ears may be insensitive to the subtle vibrations of angelic wings; but Christ, though God-Man, was a sturdy Jewish boy of twelve when He stood in the midst of leaders presumably discerning and professionally dedicated to the advancement of knowledge. Talent includes the imperative of a recognition which they withheld.

Under ordinary conditions such failure to aid talent condemns it to the slow death of wasting away. It is not less grievous because it bloodies no hands or because donnish gentlemen from the rostrum of impeccable manners pass the sentence with well modulated voices. Because it strikes at the essential man, this is that destruction which Milton declared not "the slaying of an elemental life," but of "the breath of reason itself . . . an immortality rather than a life." Out of earshot of Milton, who believed in guilt by association, one might couple his horror of "intellecticide" with that medieval revulsion from heresy which sometimes led to very caustic *auto-da-fés*.

Certainly, one cannot try the Temple doctors for a crime of omission two thousand years ago. Reviewing their case in an age

when scholarships fall like ripe plums at the slightest shaking of *arbor academica*, they seem wickedly old fashioned. Compared with Pilate, too, who also washed his hands of Christ, they appear considerably more culpable. For though he was a "fascist" and, therefore, potentially a burner of books, he paused, at least, before the majesty of Christ to ask if He were a king. In the dock of retrospection the doctors make one a little ashamed (especially if one is a teacher) that they were the first of their nation to reject the Messiah, sorry ancestors of a long line of gowned Quislings surrendering universities to force in the opening act of the tragedy which MacLeish and Viereck have stigmatized as "the treason of the intellectuals." It makes one wonder if those worm-eaten clichés about "an apple for the teacher" do not symbolize an unprobed Eden-origin of the traditional gardeners of knowledge.

It makes one wonder also with distraught Lear, upset in a topsy-turvy world, if we can anatomize such regents. What is it breeds about those hard hearts? Is there any cause in the nature of the profession which makes such hard hearts? Perhaps the Light of the World, as the brilliance of other young minds, embarrassed their incompetence, insecure behind its erudite façade, and sent it scurrying defensively. Perhaps the challenge of His questions demanded an exertion which comfortable pedantry declined to make. Perhaps academic Ottomans, then as now, bore "no brother near the throne" lest the little realm contract. We have all known teachers who, paradoxically, husbanded their know-how with miserliness, doling little to students and sharing less with colleagues lest the pennied hoard be depleted. We know other teachers who, instead of obeying the injunction to extroversion ("Going, teach all nations"), contract within the citadel ego and, however impressively, engage only in defensive operations — speaking mostly to get something off their minds instead of into the minds of their charges. Perhaps one of the Temple doctors (an emeritus recalled to sit on Ph.D. boards) was still congratulating himself on how he had phrased his examination of "the boy" when Mary and Joseph came to take Him home. Perhaps another had withdrawn early from the circle around the Christ Child to re-check his as-yet-unpublished annotations on the Law. Perhaps a third had still earlier retired from the group to fulfill the compulsive ritual of the sacred siesta.



Because the reluctant rabbis were religious teachers, one wonders if their occupational myopia should not be attributed to temple instead of academe. Religion has been known to breed esoterics who dropped the ironic curtain between the masses and *arcana*. But, as Augustine discovered in extricating himself from the labyrinths of Manicheans and Neo-Platonists alike, this was the difference between Christianity and the cults competing with it to fill the spiritual vacuum of a sagging Empire: its unique freedom from fantasy and mumbo-jumbo. By and large, the Church's record on this score is unrivalled, the best instance in history, ancient or modern, of *la carrière ouverte aux talents* — viz., the Twelve Apostles, Hildebrand or John XXIII, and the corporate American Hierarchy of 1959, each member of which is the first of his family to go to college. (In deference to statisticians I make exception for the one kinsman who cut his wisdom teeth in dental college.)

If, therefore, one lowers the stone of accusation aimed at the clerical cranium for a too-hastily alleged dereliction of talent, he may yet finger a pebble or two for the casting. The tardiness to admit lay leadership to the ranks of administrative control, for example — in the policy-making echelons of religious-conducted colleges; in the uneasy editorial chairs of diocesan weeklies; on the advisory boards of episcopal committees where D.D.'s engraving official letterheads understandably give POAUites the D.T.'s. Less offensive but more frequent is pastoral solicitude for the "poor but promising" vocation in the neighborhood — as if the vocation to intellectual excellence had no claim on patronage unless bent Churchwards. The collective corollary to which is the pietism which sometimes displaces primary ends in the parochial school while we complain that our system is second-rate and our best graduates mediocrities, forgetful of the applicants we have sent packing to Nazareth.

Still this gives no ground for anticlericalism — that larva of the totalitarian termite evolving on the surface fuzz of stagnant backwaters. The heresiarchs of the lay temple, too, have sometimes denied the Light of the World admission to their secret rites: pontifical editors closing their conclaves to all but cardinalate contributors and bulling *anathemae* to infidels-at-large; "intelligentsia" insulated in the mazes of jargon and aureoled in the

self-generations of a private communion of saints. With both, as with the Temple doctors, trade monopolies are barricaded against *oí barbaroi* whether these come as pilgrims from Nazareth or as raiders from the Ozarks. Meanwhile the lamentation for lost excellence (originally a true jeremiad) ululates off the temple walls in a long-play Levite release, freely translated as "How miserable, O Lord, is the work of our hands!" "Amen" to that. But, as the clear voices of Cantors Ellis and Weigel are drowned in the cacophonous chorus, the true minor key quavers into a major off-key. So many assertive "intellectuals" are now bewailing the "terrible state of chaos" that one suspects they are masochists hymning their frailty like wretches claiming royal descent by virtue of haemophilia. Meanwhile the boy Jesus is returning to Nazareth all over the world.

All around the country simultaneously thousands of lucky adolescents are steering convertibles into university parking lots to pick up their subsidies and scholarships. Such, along with the Temple doctors and the intellectual Incas, have their place in the general arraignment. Like all of us they share in the collective guilt, if only to the degree that the Redeemer has borne our iniquities and assumed our burdens. Perhaps they can atone for their complicity by gratefully acknowledging their salvation, whereas the Son of Man had not only no place to lay His head, but almost — if the scholarship boards of Jerusalem had their way — no place to exercise it either. The rest of us, humbly owning our responsibility, can try to remember that "As often as you did it to one of these, My least brethren, you did it unto Me" refers to feeding and clothing the hungry, naked mind as well as "Brother Ass." No encouragement of talent — the image of God — is no scholarship for Christ all over again.

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## Our Need for Wisdom

*Father Denis, O.C.D.*

God of my fathers, Lord of mercy,  
You who have made all things by Your word  
And in Your wisdom have established man  
to rule the creatures produced by You,  
To govern the world in holiness and justice,  
and to render judgment in integrity of heart:  
Give me Wisdom, the attendant at Your throne,  
That she may be with me and work with me,  
that I may know what is pleasing to You.

Wisdom 9:1-4, 10.

MAN was made for happiness, and wisdom is the science of the happy life.

Technological man is unhappy because he has science without wisdom; for science is the servant of wisdom, the knowledge of the means thereto. And how can a person be happy with the means if he does not know the end toward which they tend?

"Christ is the Wisdom of God." (1 Cor. 1) This is the first principle of the wisdom of Christianity, which "judges all things, even the deep things of God." It is not a definition but a mystery, the mystery of that loving knowledge and awareness of Jesus, "the Way, the Truth and the Life." (John 14:6)

He is not merely a dogma to be believed, but a way of life to be known, loved, and lived. He is the "Way" that St. Paul preached — the way of salvation, "a scandal to the Jews, a stumbling block



to the Greeks, but to those who are called (and who has never been called by Wisdom?), He is the power and wisdom of God; for the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. The foolish things of the world has God chosen to put to shame the 'wise,' and the weak things of the world has God chosen to put to shame the strong, and the base things of the world and the despised has God chosen, and the things that *are not*, (insofar as this world is concerned) to bring to naught the things that *are* (*something* in this world). For the doctrine of the cross is foolishness to those who perish, but to those who are saved, that is, to us, it is the power of God. For it is written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the prudence of the prudent I will reject.' (Isaias 29:14). So that, just as it is written, 'Let him who takes pride, take pride in the Lord.'" (Jeremias 9:23 f.).

This is the paradoxical poetry of Christian wisdom, the wisdom of Mary, of Bernadette of Lourdes, Therese of Lisieux, and the children of Fatima. *We need wisdom like theirs.*

*We also need the wisdom of St. Augustine, the wisdom of the Confessions and of the City of God.*

What does St. Augustine have to offer the student of Christian wisdom? Theology, especially a theology of grace and of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ. In these areas, Augustine has only had disciples. What is the secret of understanding St. Augustine? The habit of intellectual humility, for Augustine had undergone the purgation of intellectual humiliation before the goodness and grace of God, our Saviour.

He was not a scientific theologian; many of the facts of his theology are unhistorical or unproved. But Wisdom led him to the conclusions; and although his conclusions have often been misunderstood, this has not been the case with those who used the wisdom of faith. Augustine had a faith searching for understanding. The Faith was more important to him than either correctness or evidence, for the Faith is a mystery to be searched and explored and wrestled with, a "Beauty, ever ancient, ever new." *We need this Beauty — the poetry of God's grace and God's Church, and God's Incarnate Word.*

St. Thomas Aquinas systematized this poetry in his *Summas* "for beginners." But he also was a wise man. He proved that a theology and a philosophy can be precise and correct as well as beautiful. How? Because he believed that God had created man's reason, and he dared to use his reason to contemplate the things of man as well as the things of God. St. Thomas was an audacious theologian because he was a contemplative; his motto was "to have insight into Truth, and to pass this insight on to others."

What rationalist ever attempted to philosophize about the Most Blessed Trinity? Thomas did. What churchman ever dared to show the systematic channels of God's grace, the seven sacraments? Thomas did. What scribe ever dared to submit the Scriptures to the analysis of logic? to define or describe the senses of Scripture? to declare that he had a theological source which was both scientific and sapiential, pragmatic and speculative, the wisdom of Revelation and the science of the ancient Greeks? Thomas did.

*We need the boldness of Aquinas. We are fighting too many battles for wisdom with a mistrust for either faith or reason, like a boxer with one arm tied behind his back.*

St. John of the Cross stood on the shoulders of those who went before and made the contemplation which is of faith a thing knowable, understandable, and reachable by anyone who has the Faith. What audacity! to submit the action of the Holy Spirit of Wisdom to the gaze of human reason, so that reason might be purified, illuminated, freed of sin and self, and united to the Reason of God's Word-Spouse.

Here we have another systematization — not of the channels of grace, but of the *action of grace itself*. No Catholic can now say that this area is unexplored; John of the Cross was a bolder discoverer than Christopher Columbus. No priest can complain that this or that soul defied the principles of spiritual direction; John of the Cross had experienced the validity of his principles before using them with others and publishing them in his few written works — like a great research scientist, testing his hypotheses under concrete conditions, making Augustine's "Beauty," and Thomas' "Insight" useful tools in the pursuit of happiness which is the goal of Everyman — the ineffable love of a man or a woman for Jesus Christ, our best Friend.

No Protestant or Jansenist could ever say that the Catholic Faith had lost its primitive purity, its importance in the Christian scale of values; St. John of the Cross has become the Doctor of the Spiritual Life. His secret? *"Faith is the one and only means to union with Christ — to charity!"* But still it is only a means. The wisdom of Charity is the end. *We need the holy common sense, as well as the ineffable poetry, of John's wisdom.*

### **The Challenge to American Wise-men**

Jesus, St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, and St. John of the Cross have done their work well. We cannot say that our present spiritual and educational poverty is their fault. It is ours. We can go to the sources they have left us, under the guidance of a wise and holy Mother Church Teacher, and find the answers to our problems of Scriptural theology, Scholastic theology, and Spiritual theology. But there are some answers which cannot be found in these sources, because their questions had never been asked. We need to know the questions; we have to know where to search, to explore, to knock, and to wrestle to find the answers. They are not readymade.

Can physical science be baptized? Mendel did it. Pasteur did it. It can be, but how? By drawing its experiences, its methods, and its conclusions into the ancient systems of Christian wisdom. Who has done so or is doing so? Any Catholic scientist? The cross-fertilization of faith, experience, and reason would be most fruitful if an answer could be found to these questions of physical science:

a) Is a New World opening in this space age to the expanding population of a sex-mad earth? Vows of chastity are for the few. Birth-control is for fearful pagans. If the meek are to inherit the earth, where will their lots be cast? Thomas Aquinas' investigations of the earth's surface helped Spanish friars counsel Christopher Columbus; are we Catholic educators exploring this area of the cosmos? Are we sure we don't have a would-be Columbus in our midst?

b) Every educated man needs an understanding of the nature of physical science, something that most scientists think comes, like Venus, self-born — a good example of the prevalence of the myth-filled hiatus in modern education. How can Catholic high schools and colleges give these fundamental understandings to the curious minds of our young Martians? It has been done by Whitehead and Conant, among others; is it being done in your high school? in your college?

c) How about applied technology: is it really scientific because it changes? Or is it like the Bourbons: the more it changes, the more it remains the same. There is a law of progress in scientific theology because there is a law of



values regarding God, man, and creation which is embedded in the nature of things. Is it not time that we develop criteria to judge when technological progress is self-defeating and when it is really worth-while? After all, St. Augustine made his *Retractations*, St. Thomas admitted the possibility that he could be wrong — and improved his basic principles constantly by dint of hard application to the world as he found it: are scientists less infallible than Augustine and Aquinas?

Certain ethico-political problems bothered me long before Mr. John Kennedy became a candidate. They have to do with our American political scene, as well as the United Nations. I look for the political science expert who could answer this:

a) Granted that democratic institutions are necessary forms for community life in the Cities of Man and of God, granted that legislation depends much more on the logic of history than on the logic of law, who makes history? who initiates experience? Who is it that truly leads his people, as Moses led the Israelites and as Lincoln led the States (Union and Confederate) in their inevitable war? God forbid that I, a Catholic priest, should even desire to trample on this holy ground of practical politics: but wouldn't it be wonderful if politicians would do some sight-seeing there?

I, a simple Carmelite priest, received some twenty years of education for leadership of a small but important (to me) flock of clerical students. What Catholic or non-Catholic institution can match our seminaries in leadership training? I offer frequent and fervent prayers that politics may become the "art of the peaceful" as well as of "the possible."

b) Leadership seems to be a talent of rare occurrence in other fields besides politics: business and communications are two that sorely need it. A good friend of mine at Princeton University is working on a history of economics, the thesis of which demonstrates (he says) that the first law of a healthy economy is: love your neighbor as yourself. I await its publication avidly, in the belief that such a demonstration spells the salvation of free enterprise.

c) And now, communications: never in the history of humanity has so much brain-power been expended at the cost of such a financial investment, with the wastage of so much time to prove the proposition: soap cleans. Wasteful? Especially when you consider the fact that our leaders in communication (that most difficult and most challenging of all arts) are the real educators of the modern mind. When and where will that valiant man be found in communications who will allow the Image of God, the Image of Mary, and the Image of the Church Universal (the greatest stories ever told) to become staples in our television, radio, and journalistic diet? Far and from the uttermost coasts will be his worth.

But man does not live by bread alone — nor does science, politics, economics, or television. It is still theology which is wisdom, understanding, and knowledge systematized for the educated man — the grandest, broadest, deepest of all the knowledges possible to the minds of men. I challenge the Catholic theologian to find an answer to:

1. The problem (I almost said the *sin*) of a divided Christianity.
2. The problem of what an old, now cancerous, retreat-master called "this damned rush": running so fast for the almighty buck that we have no steam left for wisdom and happiness and love.
3. The problem of reversing our Catholic, post-Tridentine posture of defense to implement that dynamic imperative, "Go, and teach all nations;" for here, as in football, the axiom is true: the best offense is the best defense.
4. The crying problem of adaptation: adapting the wisdom, understanding, and science of Holy Church to the rapidly changing patterns of technological man. Here, as elsewhere, Catholic educators really do not have any oars on which to rest. The talents of the Faith have to be invested in hard work — headwork, heartwork, the work of suffering, and also footwork i.e., trial-and-error experiences. The atmosphere of the missions seems a much more fertile ground for new ideas than academic ivy towers. Why?
5. The need to make the Catholic layman the "strong and perfect Christian, the soldier (witness and apostle) of Jesus Christ" he was meant to be.

### *The Driving-Force of Catholic Education as Distinct From Non-Christian Education*

Etienne Gilson expressed, in his native France of twenty-five years ago, the real reason for Catholic education and its superiority to that education which rejects revelation:

The trouble with the "state school" is the lack of order prevailing among its various points of view, which have no other unity than that of individual preferences.

Behold the source of teen-agers' confusion and their elders'! He says even more:

The proper object of higher Catholic education is the progressive assimilation of all that is true and good to the light of faith, and its purification in that same light.

I cannot agree with Belloc that "the Faith is Europe and Europe is the Faith." I can, however, register my hearty "*concedo*" to Gilson when he says that the trouble with our Catholic education is that *it is not Catholic enough* — not universal enough in its breadth, not wise enough in its depth, not in love enough with the Faith of Christ which is the driving force behind all our tremendous efforts to build "the mind of Christ" in our American Catholic educators and students.

Catholic educators, go, increase and conquer the earth and outer space; and never forget, this is the victorious means to that conquest: *Our Faith*.

*Mrs. McNiff is everything the reader would suspect from the following article — wife, mother, writer, lecturer, an authentic intellectual. She lives in Chestnut Hill, Mass.*

## Investing the Talents

Mary Stack McNiff

IT DOES not seem possible that there could be a group not represented in the welter of words that have poured out about the status, virtues, and failings of the American Catholic intellectual. Yet — has anyone spoken up for the average intelligent reader (now busy reading this magazine, perhaps) who does not think of himself as an intellectual, who is more than a little vague about scholarship anyway, and who may feel that he is being beaten about the head without quite knowing why and certainly without knowing what, if anything, to do about it? Everyone looks to a good argument to clear the air; if it goes on indefinitely with no comprehensible effects, the non-participants are likely to wander away, completely uninterested. If such were the case in all this discussion about Catholic scholarship and Catholic intellectuals it would be a great pity. Scholarship and the intellectual life need a climate favorable to their existence, and such a climate can be created by the efforts and interest of those who think of themselves as infinitely remote from such lofty planes.

The problem is big and complicated; and it is an American problem even before it becomes a Catholic one. Since the day when Msgr. Tracy Ellis' *J'accuse* brought Catholic writers, preachers, and students into the lists, the country as a whole has been taking a serious look at its education, its values, and culture. Russian scientific success has been responsible in part for this corporate examination of conscience — and perhaps to that extent some of it has been naïve and lopsided. "Train more scientists. Start them in nursery school. Let's have no more nonsense." Since some of these enthusiasts would classify all the humanities as "nonsense" one might well question their philosophical approach to a very



real problem. Sounder minded critics have written, though, in magazine articles, newspaper features, letters to the editor, and in books. Among the latter, Jacques Barzun's *The House of Intellect* is probably one of the most perceptive. It is certainly one of the best written; Mr. Barzun's style can even make academic reports readable. Any Catholic who reads *The House of Intellect* will soon realize that the position of intellectuals and scholarship is not solely a Catholic problem. This is not to dismiss his concern, however, because, as a Catholic, he might be expected to have a somewhat special viewpoint.

### *Intellect at the Service of Christ*

An approach from this viewpoint is so simple as to be thought simple-minded. But it is basic. Our faith teaches us the reason for our existence — knowing, loving, and serving God. Sometimes we are urged to put ourselves at the service of Christ; and now we are concentrating on the intellect at the service of Christ — emphasis on the knowing, as it were. There is no space here (nor am I competent) to fight again the battle of anti-intellectualism or the pious rationalizations that cover intellectual laziness. We are taught on the best of authority that using the full measure of God-given intellect in a lifelong business of getting to know Him is an obvious ideal of an intellect in the service of Christ.

But Christ asks our service in fields less directly concerned with the prime purpose of existence. Every slight venture in search of truth is a step in the search for God who is Truth. Sometimes the work seems remote indeed, but we cannot let ourselves forget that the Truth which is God's lies waiting for discovery and illumination; it waits in test tubes, crumbling parchments, dusty records and slide rules, in the ruins of ancient dwellings, in excavations of the past, in the reaches of outer space, and in the hearts and minds of men. There is not an aspect of learning that cannot be pursued in the service of Christ. Ideally, this supernaturalized goal should make for a high grade of excellence among scholars, students, and an interested reading public, since all must accept the fact that "piety cannot replace technique." Msgr. Gerald Phelan coined that pithy phrase in his introduction to Gilson's *Christianity and Philosophy*. Referring to those who have dedicated themselves

to scholarship, Msgr. Phelan says: "And for such as these, the sanctification of the intelligence is of imperative and paramount importance. For it is principally their intelligence which they offer to God as an instrument for the accomplishment of His Holy Will."

But what of the great number of intelligent Catholics, many of them college trained, who are not dedicated scholars, whose lives keep them far removed from the academic — let alone the intellectual-life? They can help create a climate for scholarship by their interest, awareness, and support, by the nature of their reading of books and periodicals. They can remind themselves that the work of the true scholar not only gives testimony to the glory of Divine Truth, but eventually sifts down to the welfare and enrichment of society at large. Everyone has read stories about the progression from the lonely scientist in his laboratory to the benefits of anesthesia, of miracle drugs, or of what we hope will be the ultimate blessings of the split atom. It is harder to dramatize a similar progression in theology and philosophy, or in the humanities — but the circles widen in these fields, too. One example comes to mind. Father Gerald Ellard, S.J., dedicates his book, *Master Alcuin, Liturgist*, "To Professor Paul Lehmann . . . who in my student days at Munich showed me something of liturgical manuscripts. . . ." A glance at a list of Father Ellard's books is proof of his work of making the labors of scholarship increasingly accessible — right down to his little illustrated pamphlet *Follow the Mass*.

This example gives just a hint of how the findings of scholarship are worked over and made available to the youngest and the humblest. The word *humble* is used here to designate those with the least pretensions to learning. In reality, everyone graced with a Christ-centered intellectual curiosity is humble. There is no place for arrogance or cheaply won self-esteem in the light of the Spirit. It is only honest, however, to realize that the Spirit would have the Word made known on all levels, according to the gifts and capacities and differences which God has made.

### **Communication Between Scholars and Non-Scholars**

And it is at this point that one still small voice might be raised to the scholars. It is not easy (and it is sometimes impossible) for them to help laymen grasp some notion of their work — but a line

of communication would be most valuable. I recall meeting a woman who, in answering an inquiry about her family, interrupted the recital to say, "Oh but my son-in-law! He's got some kind of grant to make a bibliography — whatever that is. It will take two years. Honestly!" She seemed so convinced that he was only one step removed from arrest for vagrancy that I stood on the sidewalk trying to point out that our youngsters in school wouldn't have textbooks if someone some time had not done a bit of bibliographical research. Who knows, we might not even have some of our more lush historical novels. She grinned at me. She really knew better all along.

On a far more significant level, I have heard during the past several months two lectures, one by Miss Helen C. White of the University of Wisconsin and the other by Francis M. Rogers of Harvard University. There have been many others from time to time, but I cite these two because they were singularly successful in their ability to make their knowledge alive and interesting for audiences of varied non-specialists. Better still, they aroused enthusiasm conveying something that is real, but seldom shared and often forgotten — the excitement of scholarship. Scholars cannot afford to dissipate their time, but a judicious sharing of their talents and discoveries would be a tremendous help to the cause in general. It would encourage understanding and sympathy on the part of the general thinking public, and hope for the student who might one day be a scholar.

### *Climate for Scholarship*

Catholics can contribute to the creation of a climate for scholarship and the intellectual life with their attitudes and habits of thought on the one hand — and their checkbooks on the other. Let us take up the crassly material first. Catholics have been wonderfully generous in contributing to buildings. Libraries, gymnasiums, field houses, dormitories, chapels, laboratories, auditoriums, and football fields across the land are named in honor of the loyal donors who made them possible. It has not been so easy to get gifts (even mindful of favorable tax benefits) for fellowships, professorships, book funds, or grants for research. It would be nice to think that a word to the rich would be sufficient. Failing that,



we can remember that many of our buildings are the result of joint giving by groups, clubs, or alumni associations. Surely it would be gratifying to contribute to the "John Smith Chair in Medieval History" or the "Alumni Fellowships in Advanced Research."

The matter of individual attitudes is not quite so clear-cut. In many cases, any aspiration toward a Catholic intellectual life means a sharp change in habits of thought — and that is never easy. We have in our midst today many college graduates who are recognizable only by father's devotion to football games, reunions, and "contacts," and mother's well groomed appearance at alumnae fashion shows. The college degrees have made possible for them "the better things in life." But have they found the better things in life? They could have. College should have endowed them with intellectual curiosity on a life-term basis; least of all should it have given them the impression that "they have had it." If this unflattering summary describes a goodly portion of those who should be living some kind of intellectual life, the situation is still not hopeless.

### *The Play of the Mind*

Anyone reminding himself of the consoling thought that one is at every age a novice can determine to make an effort to widen the scope of his life by reading and thinking beyond the confines of his special vocation in life. He need not return to school. The whole thing is cumulative. It is possible to start with a single newspaper feature or a magazine article and, using it for a springboard, look around for related information following a kind of informal reading plan. Anyone with sense enough to do this knows that he will never become a greatest living authority, but he derives the satisfaction of sustained thought along a given line. Soon he finds that he is better able to follow and evaluate the thinking of others; he has worked his own brain enough to appreciate the labor behind the smoothly written words he reads; he is less ready to make snap judgments — he would rather look it up and think a bit more. He will enjoy thinking — not solely for the solution of his immediate problems, but in the mature delight in ideas for their own sake. In other words, he will be offering his intellect to God no matter what aspect of knowledge he might pursue.

More specifically, the Catholic intellect can find no greater reward than in application to the Faith itself. Many of us reach a point where we realize that the spiritual side of our lives has been in a bad state of retarded development — almost lost in the shuffle in the normal growth process. The practice of the Faith is probably devoted and sincere enough; but it is in no sense a part of whatever intellectual concerns we might have. A friend of mine gave a talk to undergraduates along this line, and what he had to say is applicable to any one of us. In asking the young people to develop an intellectual interest in their religion he said: "I am asking you to do all this (normal spiritual life with its religious obligations) and then some. I am suggesting that you have a private second academic major which is your religion." Perhaps that idea sounds too remote for busy people — unless they stop to ask themselves just how busy they really are and about what. But my friend would reassure them: "What I am suggesting is fun. Gaining knowledge can entertain as well as satisfy. Pursue knowledge seriously, yes, but also gaily." Thus he speaks and anyone who knows him can testify that he lives his teaching well.

So there is no need for the innocent bystanders in this wide-ranging battle to give up in despair. It is our battle — as Americans and as Catholics. God has given us intelligence. Christ made clear His evaluation of the one who buried his talent.

## ROSEMARY AND THYME

Fragrance beneath my feet,  
Where stones and pathway meet,  
Bordered with thyme.

Giving a sweet return  
For crushing steps that burn,  
Through arbors green with fern,  
Bordered with thyme.

Could I but show such grace,  
Leave in some tortured place,  
Beauty for grime, —  
Keep in my heart a space,  
Bordered with thyme.

GRACE L. MESICK

*Miss Dohen is the author of Vocation to Love, and Journey to Bethlehem. The latter is reviewed in this issue.*

## St. Teresa and Common Sense

Dorothy Dohen

ANY devotee of St. Teresa of Avila is familiar with the story of her reaction when someone pleaded with her to accept as a postulant a young girl who was noted for her piety. The saint brushed the matter of her real or supposed piety aside, and asked, "But does she have common sense?" She went on: "Our Lord will give her devotion and we will teach her how to pray, but if she does not have common sense she is hopeless."

I must admit that the above is my own free and colloquial account of the incident. An episode in the life of the saint that impressed me when I first read of it a number of years ago, it has continued to impress me as time has gone on. I imagine a good many people have shared my experience with these words of St. Teresa. Initial surprise bordering on shock: How could she brush aside the gifts of grace so lightly; how could she give so little thought to a postulant's holiness?

I am inclined to feel that the answer to these questions, the solution of this perplexity, comes only through years of experience in living. True, St. Teresa's stand can be explained adequately. Presupposing as it does the solid Thomistic formulation that "grace builds on nature," it is readily defensible. However, it is only after a long period of observation of our own struggles and other people's lives that we come to realize the wisdom of St. Teresa's answer, as well as the worth of the accolade given her as the "Saint of Common Sense."

### *Natural Prudence — Emotional Stability*

Common sense seems to be a combination of intellectual *and*



emotional qualities. Synonymous with a certain fundamental *good judgment* which presumes normal intelligence, it does not imply superior or unusual intellectual gifts. It may reveal itself in a particular act, but common sense implies a habit rather than an isolated action. I suppose if we want to be technical about it, we can call it the natural or acquired virtue of *prudence*.

But in an age where the emotions have been given special prominence, we see prudence — or common sense — not just as a virtue of the practical intellect, but as an indication of emotional stability. There is continual conversation today among theologians and psychiatrists about the connection between spirituality (theological virtue) and mental health. For, while the theological virtues are not intrinsically dependent on emotional health or the lack of it, in our lives our growth in faith, hope, and charity is conditioned by the growth of the moral virtues, of which prudence is the chief. And prudence in practice seems to depend upon an emotionally healthy life. Fears, phobias, insecurity, feelings of inferiority, extreme and unregulated feelings of aggression or of intense dislike or hatred, the deprivation of love which results in a habitual inability to get along well with other people — all these evidences of emotional immaturity and unbalance influence our evaluation of concrete situations, cause us to react in an unreasonable way to certain persons, color our judgment in the decisions we make, and greatly modify the actions we pursue.

### *In Religious Life*

Common sense, which in St. Teresa's day was simply the home-grown variety of prudence, in our more scientific age is seen to involve not only desirable mental attributes but emotional balance as well. Today's novice mistress may not depend simply, as did St. Teresa, on her own astute observations of the candidate and her skill in evaluating her background, aspirations, and past history, as revealed at least partially in information given by confessors and others who know her well. Today's novice mistress can present a good case for having the candidate submit to psychiatric examination and psychological test as the modern, logical outcome of St. Teresa's injunction that she should be examined for her common sense. This thinking does not claim that psychiatrists can determine

the existence of a religious vocation; neither is it their function. They can, however, point out those things in a candidate's emotional and psychological structure which would make the living of community life (or the actual fulfillment of the religious vocation) impossible or extremely difficult — in the same way as a physician would detect signs of diabetes, tuberculosis, or a general physical debility that would make entering a monastery inadvisable.

When St. Teresa said that the girl who lacked common sense would be "hopeless" as a nun, she was not making any judgment as to the ultimate outcome of the girl's struggle to save her soul; any more than the psychiatrists and theologians who argue that a severe neurosis is an impediment in the pursuit of sanctity are implying that the person who is an emotional cripple will lose his soul. Ever since the good thief took heaven by storm it has been recognized that one moment of impelling grace is enough to make a saint. The homosexuals, drug addicts, alcoholics, derelicts, and confirmed prostitutes who suffer from serious mental and emotional disturbances that make it humanly impossible for them to lead an (objectively) virtuous life over a sustained period can still, by their receptiveness to God's grace, prepare themselves for the overwhelming gift of His mercy and love which may propel them into paradise far ahead of the *balanced* people.

### *In Lay Life*

But this article is not concerned with these emotionally handicapped people, nor is it for those whose incurable lack of common sense makes the systematic carrying out of their vocation as Christians in either the cloister or the world almost impossibly difficult. For, if I may presume to add a postscript to St. Teresa, common sense is certainly requisite for spirituality in lay life. Perhaps more so than in religion, since the prudence of the superior and the pattern of community life may tend to compensate for the individual's lack of judgment or emotional unbalance.

I interpret St. Teresa's message of common sense to be addressed to those who already have enough of it to be able to acquire more, and especially to those who are responsible for influencing the spiritual development of other people.

One of the great dangers I see to the development of spir-

ituality among American Catholics is the result of an understandable reaction to the common sense of American Protestants. The whole Puritan tradition articulated by Benjamin Franklin in such proverbs as "Time is money," emphasized what the individual could achieve by hard work, efficiency, thrift, and all the "common sense" virtues. Material, external success proved his godliness, and the poor man who lacked the common sense to get ahead was viewed by the successful, respectable Christian not only as humanly unfortunate but also as a moral and spiritual failure.

It would be outside the purpose of this article to investigate the whole complex of causes that conditioned the Catholic reaction to this essentially Calvinistic phenomenon. Suffice it to say that the reaction proceeded not only from traditional Catholic theology and spirituality, but at least partially from the need for a psychological defense, since Catholics as the more recent immigrant group tended to be less successful materially than Protestants and to have a lower prestige rating in the community.

The consequent development of what can be termed "religious romanticism" among Catholics showed itself in the thinking and acting of various apostolic lay groups in the past decade. Such reasoning as "The Christian is not supposed to be efficient," or "There is no need to develop the natural virtues," or the implication that "Natural prudence is always worldly prudence"; the dismissal of the failure of an individual or group project with a facile "It was God's will,"<sup>1</sup> without willingness to investigate the material or human causes for the failure, or to take responsibility for errors in judgment or imprudent action — all these indicate a rejection of the role of common sense. A certain false abandonment to Providence which can be a convenient mask for human sloth; the equating of lack of common sense with holy simplicity; the rejection of the use of human reason in determining a course of action while one waits for direct spiritual inspiration — all these are obstacles to the development of sound spirituality for the indi-

<sup>1</sup> Von Huegel's saying that "We make the Will of God ourselves" contains a truth that is as profound as it is frightening. We have probably all met the type of pious soul who while she eagerly proclaims her thirst for the Will of God, invariably interprets as God's Will only those happenings which exactly coincide with her wishes! Her response would be amusing did it not reveal an almost immovable block to the self-knowledge necessary for any genuine growth in humility and charity.



vidual, but are even more dangerous when they permeate the thinking of a religious community or lay group.

### **Realism of St. Teresa**

But such religious romanticism cannot be countered merely by returning to a common-sense level of thinking or acting. Masking as it often does a genuine yearning for the Divine, and the hesitant, immature gropings of a soul who seriously desires union with God, religious romanticism is looking for a deep spirituality. And here, I think, is revealed the special importance of St. Teresa for our day. Great contemplative that she is, she can guide the would-be contemplative along a way that is as straight as it is secure. St. Teresa builds a spiritual edifice that skyscrapes to the heavens from its deep foundation of common sense.

For St. Teresa, common sense is at once a safeguard to, and a judge of, sound spirituality. Her tart remark that the troublesome ecstatic nun should be given enough food and made to take the required hours of sleep is as much a shrewd evaluation of the nun as it is at the same time a declaration that the spiritual life needs a solid, natural base. That St. Teresa was not taken in by the contemporary pseudo-mystics of Spain is testimony not so much to her holiness and spiritual insight (for there were holy people who were deceived by these popular frauds) as it is proof of her native common sense which was sharpened and perfected by human experience. (One groans to think of all the convents and parochial schools which were built shoddily and at excessive cost because a sharp contractor knew when to display his rosary beads or make the proper pious remark to impress the unsuspecting pastor or Sister superior!)

That St. Teresa was herself an excellent businesswoman is evident from every page of the *Book of Foundations*. But it would be a mistake to think that the common sense which made her active works possible, that gave a secure foundation to the Carmelite Reform, and facilitated her relations with nuns as well as secular folk, was not integrated with her own interior life or system of spirituality.

### **Intelligent Obedience**

From many possible traits of St. Teresa I have picked three

which seem to me to especially demonstrate her common sense. The first, and in many respects the most obvious one, is her reliance on her superiors and directors as a check on her own interior life and communications from Our Lord. Healthily aware of the possibilities of self-deception, she revealed her visions and locutions to the inspection of the Church and its representatives. But here there is an important point to note: St. Teresa's choice of directors and advisors was a prudent one. Her deep respect for the priesthood did not prevent her from being careful to choose herself (and to advise others to choose as well) a director who had good judgment. Similarly her deep spirit of obedience and docility to the Church did not blind her from seeing when she was being given bad advice, nor did it make her sacrifice her common-sense evaluation of situations under the pretext of "deeper surrender." This latter is an especially important point for lay people who would imitate St. Teresa, and who sometimes are inclined to mistrust their common sense when it tells them that certain strictures of religious obedience are incompatible with the responsibilities of lay life,<sup>2</sup> or that certain pious practices are inappropriate to their state in life or a violation of the rights of spouse or parents or children.

### *Responsibility*

St. Teresa had too much balance to allow herself to shift responsibility onto another's shoulders on some phony spiritual pretext. Similarly she had too much good sense to use her supernatural gifts as a substitute for making the natural, human effort to do a job well. This use of her reason to discover how a course of action should be undertaken, as well as the natural means for accomplishing the action, is the second demonstration of her common sense. That Our Lord prophesied that a convent would be founded in such and such a place did not prevent her from walking off her sandals looking for a suitable site, investigating the advantages and liabilities of property that was offered to her, or of haggling with the owners over an agreeable price. Intimate union with Our Lord did not preclude for Teresa the necessity of human effort. Rather as one studies her life one gets the impression that the more she

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<sup>2</sup> For further elaboration of this point see my article, "The Evangelical Counsels for Lay People," in the December, 1957, issue of *Cross and Crown*.

progressed in prayer, the more her wits were sharpened. Sense of the eternal did not negate common sense in time, and vision of divine things did not blur her sight of temporal realities.

### *Humanism*

Spiritual theologians stress the danger for would-be mystics of giving up meditation prematurely before they are truly called to the contemplative way. An analogous danger arises for contemplatives that they turn their backs prematurely on men, and the duties they owe to human society, under the pretext of giving themselves wholly to Divine love. St. Teresa herself never fell into this pitfall. Perhaps it was at least partially because she had too much natural love of people and attraction to them ever to be tempted to disregard the duties of fraternal charity. For her, love of neighbor was always part of love of God. One can speculate that the words of St. John the Evangelist could have been uttered by St. Teresa if he had not anticipated her. For, he gave to Christians of all time the common-sense proof of love when he wrote: "If you do not love your neighbor whom you see how can you say you love God whom you do not see?"

Teresa who danced to amuse her nuns, who had a loving care for her relatives, who sympathized with the burdens of married women, did not sacrifice fraternal charity under the compulsion of a spurious love for God. Evidence of so much more beside, it is nevertheless the third trait of her common sense. It seems belaboring the point to say anymore about it, were it not that would-be contemplatives of both the world and the cloister sometimes seem to give but little attention to the ordinary demands of fraternal charity. Many of these, in lay life especially, reveal themselves in ordinary social conventions — gracious gestures, thoughtful words, visits to the ill or the bereaved, cheering the depressed, and rejoicing over good news. They are not proof of heroic charity; they are just the fragments of love that must be gathered up, lest they be lost and ourselves with them. That the awful indictment, "They think because they love no one that they love God," is made mentally against many potential saints both in religious and lay life is cause for sadness. But it often is an indictment too against the common sense of directors and superiors who guide young,



generous souls desiring to give *all* to God into ways that disregard fraternal charity. That one never grows too holy to need to practice love of neighbor seems platitudinous; yet how often Christians give the impression of having outgrown the Gospels, and the works of mercy with them!

Against this, St. Teresa's common-sense spirituality for contemplatives is strong antidote. And she who wanted her daughters "to be strong men" is likewise a vigorous guardian against *spiritual momism*. Much as she demanded obedience from her nuns, she saw to it that they learned to take responsibility as well as to obey. Teresa who desired that every postulant be potentially capable of becoming prioress wanted her daughters to use their common sense and to develop it. In the young Reform, when of necessity young nuns were put into positions of responsibility, encouragement to stand on their own feet would seem to have been inevitable. And yet I have the feeling that St. Teresa would have had the same notions whether or not there was external need for personal common sense in her nuns. She saw too clearly the necessity of common sense for sturdy spirituality even to want to keep her daughters immature children. Spiritual momism — the tendency of superiors and spiritual directors to keep subjects or penitents tied to their apron strings and prevent them from achieving spiritual maturity — was foreign to her spirit.

For St. Teresa realized that it takes spiritual as well as emotional maturity to follow the Gospel injunction: "Be ye wise as serpents and as simple as doves." Her own life proved the practicality of this paradox; for she who is acclaimed as the Saint of Common Sense is also honored as the Seraph of Divine Love.

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# Our Un-Catholic Philosophy

A Dialogue With Edmund Wilson

Thomas Coffey

MR. EDMUND WILSON has asserted<sup>1</sup> that the Roman Catholic "does not have to be honest in the sense in which the term is ordinarily used — any more than the Communist does." This, to say the very least, seems like an *unusual* charge. We all know of people who professed religions which they did not believe. Most of us have met individuals who professed religions which they did not practice. But to say that everyone of us has the opportunity to meet a person who professes a religion, and who practices it, but *does not have to be honest* is an unusual thing.

Honesty, of course, is only *one* of the virtues. But it *is*, significantly, a virtue. It has long been idealized by men of different places and times. And one might well weigh the chances of survival for any Christian organization which conducts its business without a positive regard for it. The mind naturally wonders, then, in considering Mr. Wilson's remarks, whether one of the great religious houses could really be as empty and bare as he has said.

Still, Mr. Wilson is a thinking man and is not given to making ludicrous accusations. The fact, I suppose, that no official spokesman for the Catholic Church has replied to Wilson's statement, or even discussed it publicly, might indicate that there is *something* of accuracy in it. But, quite frankly, as a layman in theological matters, I do not see how the charge can be proved or disproved.

Nevertheless, I am greatly interested in the practical import of what Mr. Wilson has said. I believe he has put his hand on a sore spot in the contemporary religious situation, and that elaborate investigation of the charge itself which he has made can serve a

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<sup>1</sup>A *Piece of My Mind*, by Edmund Wilson. Doubleday Anchor Books, New York, 1958.

useful purpose. This investigation ought to proceed from an understanding of the historical context of the Catholic Church on the American scene.

### *A Liberal Church and Conservative Catholics*

Every day we see about us inconsistencies and internal contradictions in the moral perch on which contemporary Roman Catholics have situated themselves. I myself try to recognize this situation for what it is, and I call it by the same word that Mr. Wilson has used: *dishonest*. I sometimes wonder whether the word "dishonest" is entirely accurate and fair. But when I go back and review the doctrine of the Catholic Church as well as those moments in history when it most closely approximated what it stands for, I see quite clearly that the word "dishonest" is sufficiently fitting to describe the current situation.

For the Catholic Church, as I see it in its history and teaching, has been liberal, aggressive, assimilative, vitally involved with its whole being in the affairs of the moment, broad in its understanding and vision as well as a thousand other things of which the extremely conservative Catholic of today has never dreamed. Yet the conservative Catholic controls the contemporary Catholic Church. And all of us who call ourselves Catholics are more or less identified with him.

*More or less*, to be sure; since we all have the freedom to work things out differently than he does, according to the light of conscience. But identified, also, because in history, in the chronicle of the events of this hour, we who belong to the Catholic thing expose a single face to our fellow men and to posterity. This face may be a caricature of true Catholicism or it may resemble the inmost soul that Catholicism has at times demonstrated among men: it is we, as a group, who bear the responsibility for this face and who believe we must answer for it.

The distinction, then, between the nature of the Catholic thing and its manifestation is not just footwork: it is something that every moderately read person knows quite well. It is also something that the more-than-moderately read person sees as the nerve of the problem that is central to the life of the Church in terms of history — a respect for creation, and the demands of time. For if the Church



is to live and not merely to survive, it must constantly readapt itself, from age to age, to the forms and customs of a changing society. It must continually reinvigorate the evolving material order by new expressions of the spiritual energy with which it considers itself charged. If it fails to do so, it abandons its historical, social, world-embracing activity. It turns the world over to what it believes to be negative and destructive forces which, in the ultimate accounting by its own doctrine, make the world uninhabitable.

This world-embracing activity of the Church is one with which contemporary Catholics are not sufficiently familiar. As I myself view the American Catholic community, I find it almost completely forgetful of the Church except as an institution and symbolically therefore, if not really, cut off from the secular society of the moment. In it there are people who "play down" secular accomplishment, on the one hand, while, on the other, they try to "swallow up" its achievements without recognizing them for what they fully mean in themselves.

It cannot be too greatly emphasized that there is some dishonesty in the "playing down" and the "swallowing up." Both represent a kind of apostolic utilitarianism that twists reality, that distorts reality, in order to achieve its own purpose. The purpose may be good; it is in fact regarded as supremely good. But does this authorize it to annihilate those things that are considered less sacred than itself? Does this allow it sometimes to repudiate secular energy, sometimes to ignore it? The answer of course is obvious. It is also incriminating. It is, in fact, so incriminating that the "guilt" of the defendant ought to be more fully established.

### *Examples of Dishonesty Among Us*

Let me choose, out of hundreds of possibilities, a dozen or so instances of what I mean.

Almost all Catholics have listened to the preacher who tries to domesticate psychiatry or who tries to condemn psychiatry, but who, in either case, fails to recognize the science for what it is, apart from the Sermon on the Mount and in itself. We have also watched the apologete attempting to total up statistics, from whatever direction they come, and who does not see that the quantitative element in a fact is just as dangerous to us today as philo-

sophical authority was for the medieval scholastics: it is a waxed nose, and can be twisted in any way the mind desires. We have seen the Canon lawyer trying to solve the modern problem of Church and State by the medieval formula, and whose chop-logic is just as bad as cheap beer, for both glut the appetite without satisfying it.

Some of us have seen the theologian, in his area of work, hamstrung by tradition and formula, and apparently willing to leap outside history and creation to establish the last jot and tittle of what he considers Thomism. (Thomas himself, I am sure, would have admitted outright that he was wrong on the matter of the Immaculate Conception. I do not think he could have anticipated the developments of modern science as much as we are told he did. And I strongly doubt whether he was the founder of the Boy Scouts.) The moral theologian arouses the suspicion of not a few Catholics when he makes Christianity to be a kind of festoon: he does not notice that in our pluralistic and industrialized society, *laborare est orare* cannot have the same meaning it had for the medievals, but that *laborare* must, first of all, be *laborare*. Our biographers and historical novelists do a disservice to us as well as to outstanding Catholic figures (for example, Pius XI, St. Francis of Assisi, Cardinal Newman, Ignatius Loyola) when they picture these people simply as watchdogs of orthodoxy, and not at all concerned with the bucking-tactic involved in the restoration of the Christian image. And so on through practitioners of other sciences and arts, sacred and humanistic, who do not realize that the underpinnings of our society have been shaken, that our world is moving in almost every order toward something different and new, and that they are required to be as creative as the early Christians and Fathers of the Church.

None of these people are, in my opinion, deliberately dishonest. Certainly they are not completely so. Most of them are fairly well equipped and all of them, it is to be hoped, are good-intentioned. But something more is necessary. They must eliminate the inadequacy in their understanding of the world situation and do something about the lack of historical perspective in what they have to say to the people of their times. They cannot continue to carry on their backs the two old men of the sea — the grand success of the

Middle Ages and the great failure of the Reformation. If they are going to be "apostles," and remain uninformed about what is happening today, then they will have to pay the price of saying things that have little practical bearing on the lives of people who stand on twentieth century soil. The price, understandably, is to be called "dishonest."

The dishonesty in areas of pastoral work, theological scholarship, and serious writing all filter down, to make matters worse, to more practical spheres of life. As I page through the American Catholic newspapers or watch the Catholic mind at work on the American social scene, I cannot fail to be impressed by this fact. The Catholic, admittedly, wants to be adjusted to the modern situation. He works hard at showing how advance in many fields and developments in the social area are all marvelously adapted to the "Faith." But doesn't the Church also teach that it is not tied up with any particular political regime or way of economic life and that it can make its way in any social climate worthy of man? *Worthy of man*: here is another rub. Does this include the administrations of Franco and other dictators but not those of Stalin, Khrushchev, or Mao-Tse-Tung? It may well be that there is a distinction here, the matter of atheism aside. It is, however, hard to get at what it is, precisely and exactly, by following our Catholic Sunday newspapers.

The biggest problem in the practical orders is that the Catholic is frequently dishonest with himself. "We do not hold the Encyclicals against *you*" said the Socialist Angelo Rappoport to a Catholic speaker back in the thirties, "but we reproach you for scorning the Papal Encyclicals." Even the Popes themselves have had to complain about opposition to their teaching, especially on social matters, and the neglect of it by Catholics. Pius XI wrote with special relevance to the French scene, but also with an eye on other countries, I believe, when he said:

"What is to be thought of the action of those Catholic employers who in one place succeeded in preventing the reading of Our Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* in their local churches? Or of those Catholic industrialists who even to this day have shown themselves hostile to a labor movement that We Ourselves recommended? Is it not deplorable that the right of private property defended by the Church should so often have been used as a weapon to defraud the workingman of his just salary and his social rights?"

(*Divini Redemptoris*)



### *Matter of Life and Death — Not a Safe System*

We are not dealing here with something whose effects remain in the upper theological regions or get encased in the printed pages of a book. Here, above all, it is a question of man's *body* and *blood*, his *work*, his *bread*. In my own reading of the Gospels or the history of the Catholic Church, I see these four words repeated innumerable times and a defense thrown around man's person, his life, his conscience, his property, the essential equality of his being with people of all races and all conditions before God. But, except for rare instances, I do not see them repeated in season and out of season on the American social scene.

Could it be that people of earlier times were not afraid to risk, to make a mistake, perhaps, and to begin again, but to keep on fighting? And that the Catholic leaders of our times are content to condemn only what they know, or think they know, is wrong: going steady, rock-and-roll music, plunging necklines, horror comic-books, and low-rated movies? The latter program would seem to make Christianity a religion of chastity, or at best, fear. There are still many, I take it, who believe that Christianity should give primacy to charity and to brotherly love, neither of which can ever be abstractions.

There are of course Catholics who speak about things that exist outside the parochial community. Many of them make important contributions to science, to culture, and to an understanding of various social issues. Yet even these Catholics can be seen, for the most part, to be on the defensive. They sometimes try to prove something before they "have experience." There seems to be little possibility, if any, of their engaging in a "dialogue" with the contemporary thinkers outside their own ranks. They seem to have made up their minds ahead of time. They come into the arena of daily thought and action only to convince, not to learn. And they are sometimes even found to shift their positions in order to net a bigger haul of converts than the exigencies of truth or of honesty might allow.

It is this latter point that probably suggested to Edmund Wilson the comparison between the Catholic and the Communist. Each, Wilson seems to argue, "may function by foul means as well as by fair" provided only that the interests are maintained of some doc-

trinal superstructure or idealized community to which each is pre-committed. Both, he appears to say, require a good deal of moral "flexibility" in order to operate in the different strata of modern society and to gain adherents to their causes.

The Catholic, of course, is always horrified by such a comparison. But however difficult it is for him to face it, there is *something*, at least, in it to be learned. The Catholic cannot continue to give "the impression of eating his cake and having it too" as Wilson said. He has to be willing to re-examine his traditions in the light of what reliable modern scholarship has uncovered. As a result, he may have to do a number of difficult things. It may be necessary to shake loose from the existing seminary or parish arrangements, if they are shown to be unusable in terms of sociological findings. It may be necessary to admit that secularists and pragmatists are not, in reality, trying to trick the Catholic Church, but that they too have something to contribute to an understanding of the pluralistic real. It may be necessary to dispense with some of those "unassimilated and unassimilable clans" within the Catholic press. The Catholic will have to look at things in a different way and do a lot of homework. It will not be comfortable to do this. But the whole world is considered in a desperate situation today, and the Catholic himself believes that he has the Consolation of the Spirit.

### *Witnessing In Values Responsibility*

No one, certainly, may ask the Catholic to give up the institutional or dogmatic aspects of the Church's life. No one should ever request that he abandon the Sacraments in which he believes, the laws which are an essential part of his religious life, or the rulers in his Church to whom he freely dedicates himself. But outside of these orders of Catholic life, there is always room for a lot of house cleaning, re-evaluation, and readaptation. The failure to undertake such responsibilities shows a lack of moral principle, a failure in authenticity and virtue — particularly that of honesty. It also, strikingly, reveals a lack of faith — the type of faith, at least, which is never stale and sanctimonious because it is first concerned, not with converting or proving, but with "witnessing"; and which, before it gets involved in the statistical, the apologetic, and the diplomatic, first wants to discover the meaning of this moment, this experience, this order.

Such a faith might be regarded as honest as well as real. Wilson, however, finds the public image of Catholicism to be both dishonest as well as unreal, and is willing to let it pass as such. He is even willing to compliment it. For the Catholic, he says, "can never be a rank or a hollow fraud in the way that the Protestant can."<sup>2</sup> The Catholic then, in Wilson's terms, is saved from hypocrisy, but only because his faith brings him to settle for what is next-to-nothing in the practical or moral orders. He can have free-run to lead the life of a scoundrel, if he so desires, but only at the cost of admitting that his beliefs can never square with a vibrant human reality that is molded in accordance with them. He can be like the Spanish grandee whose sword decorated the medieval altar on the Sabbath and yet caused the peasants' necks to bend during the week; or else the middle-brow who wants his bread and circuses and doesn't give a hang about any creed except that in which he happened to be born. Running through the consciousness of these types as well as the concept of the Catholic who *does not have to be honest*, there is indeed little of the claim to a moral principle which controls all of life.

But the Catholic will be excused, it is hoped, if he refuses to recognize something as an inescapable necessity just because it is an unfortunate fact. He may even want to condemn the fact which he sees in the name of a higher necessity in which he believes and which, moreover, the historical record has at times vindicated. He remains willing to confess his susceptibility to dishonesty, and to much worse among the vices known to man. But does he have to pull down the temple on top of his own failure? Not everyone who is a Catholic believes that he does.

Many hold that the Catholic thing eludes us; that we have to chase after it rather than wait for it to catch up with us; and that the Church destroys, perhaps, in order to fulfill but certainly not the reverse. Long ago in our history we Catholics rejected the Brabantian idea of the twofold truth, theological and real. We have never felt too happy about being saddled with responsibility for the Machiavellian drama running through the history of the modern states. And we have remained consistently cool to the teaching of

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<sup>2</sup> I do not mean to agree with this statement. I simply use it as an illustration of Mr. Wilson's thought.



Kant, who professed belief in a reality that *had* to be so, even when he didn't know why. We Catholics, as thinking men, rejected such *pis-allers*, and chiefly because they themselves first rejected man and time and thought. We see no reason why, in the modern age these views have to be accepted, either theoretically or practically as an inner part of a life that is both more rich and more real.

### Need Common Frame of Reference

*More real:* here is the hitch as far as contemporary thinkers are concerned. The Catholic stands for something that is above the material and the experiential spheres of reality. He is not willing to unload the baggage, as it is considered today, of established tradition, certified dogma, and legitimate authority — all of which defy experimental analysis. He will not accept the position of the pragmatist who, an absolutist by a kind of reverse-english, wants to erect "experience" into dogma, and build some all-controlling system of thought out of historical force and brinkmanship. The Catholic considers the position he takes to be more adequate to reality, to be a totality which pre-exists and encloses us, seminally, first, but also really, because it is *more real*.

But what, the modern man asks, does "more real" mean? The modern does not see higher and lower spheres of reality as Aquinas did. He sees the real to be simply the real, and to tell him that something is "more real" is taken to mean that it is not real at all. The modern does not even subscribe to the old functional realism of the Protestant or the Cartesian ways of thought, each of which recognized a kind of Jacob's ladder, within the knowing subject, going from high to low. He sees reality as something which is *there, nowhere else*, which cannot be evaded or transcended and which is permanently real: real because it involves *him* at that vertiginous point of encounter where life takes both its coloring and its form. The modern painter and sculptor, for instance, disregard the material object from which the "reality" of their art originates: they try to destroy it so that they may express it, make it "transparent" or "lucid."

When such a man hears the Catholic speak of what is "more real," he cannot help but believe that the Catholic is dishonest. To a certain extent he is right. The Catholic *is* dishonest. And his

dishonesty reaches back through the whole line of educators, scholars, and theologians who failed to prepare him to communicate with the people of his age, who failed to see in the new realism which the modern world has framed, a genuine retreat from solipsism and an openness to all of life — including the supernatural. The reason for this dishonesty is grounded, ironically, in the nature of the Catholic thing. For the Catholic belongs to a group which is supposed to be universal — communicative and communicating (as well as communing) throughout the ages. It is not intended to be a circle of this or that dimension, but a fullness. And to do anything to change its nature is dishonest.

### *Honesty Demands Re-examination*

The contemporary American Catholic is a member of a group which, for the most part, thrives on this dishonesty. It has rejected the existential mood as well as philosophy which this age considers confirmed: transparency (Jaspers), epiphany (Joyce), lucidity (Gide) as well as the whole general conception of reality (working its way through art and history as well as the literature of this hour) that is derived not from the external but from the internal world. The contemporary Catholic has been afraid of what is contemporaneous. He has condemned it as false mysticism and subjectivism — even before he has properly examined it. He has gone along cultivating something that belonged to a former time and which, for all its important advantages, is not deserving of the name *philosophia perennis* until it gets itself updated and thoroughly revised. To do this is going to take a lot of work. It means removing the self-imposed and wholly arbitrary restrictions that we have placed upon ourselves in many fields of study. It will not be easy. But we will not be honest until it is done, or at least seriously undertaken.

As far as the temporal order is concerned, our dishonesty with ourselves has necessarily eventuated in dishonesty with others. When we exclude, for instance, as a test of living values, the standard of reality which Rilke gives in his poem "Experience of Death" how can we Catholics expect to communicate our message, which we insist is universal, to an age that is soaked, preconsciously but fully, with Rilke's standard. If we regard the contemporary philosophic dramatization of man on the stage of life as an affectation,

how can we expect a body of men who subscribe to this view to welcome a batch of formulas neatly packaged-up and ready for use? The Catholic, understandably, wants the comfort that attaches to ironclad regulations worked out ahead of time in accordance with a somewhat rigorous conception of human nature; but need the people of his time remind him that, as far as they are concerned reality is something one can know only in encounter with fellow men in love, or by going into the womb of the world in work, or by experiencing the border situations of life in suffering and in death? It is neither wise nor correct for Catholics to reject modern art or contemporary thought as insincere or side-of-the-mark, and then to expect that they can get off judgment as honest folk. It is not wise for Catholics to try to compress the human spirit into a static and fixed inertia, for life is movement and the spiritual order especially has its laws of growth.

The dishonesties of Catholics, which are mostly medieval and scholastic dishonesties, tell against the Catholic thing. This, for the Catholic, ought to give them a new dimension. He ought to be frightened by them. If he were, he would then be in a position to see that both modern and Christian philosophy are both fundamentally concerned with *reality*. He would know that all the Churches consider their existence bound up with making Christ's teaching a living fabric of the modern age. He would perceive the amazing synonymy of desire between Christians and men of good will, everywhere, whether they be deists, positivists, Marxists, secularists, or pragmatists. Armed with such a view, he would then be able to work for the unity of all nations and peoples, who, as Joseph de Maistre told us a century ago, may have been broken only to be made more fully one.

But will even the unity of all peoples eliminate the possibility of dishonesty or hypocrisy? I do not think so. These appear to be an intrinsic part of the human drama ever since God descended into history, ever since the day when we were asked to be on the side of Truth against ourselves. Still, we can form corpuscular convictions. We are not forced to keep our gaze within narrow horizons. There is no intrinsic necessity discoverable in the Gospels that we should reject the world, or that we should escape the world, but only that we should enter the world, and in the fullest meaning of the words, that we should make the best of it.

# BOOK REVIEWS

THE HIDDEN FACE, by Ida F. Göerres, Pantheon, N. Y., 1959, 428 pp., \$4.95

Therese Martin, a young French girl who entered the Carmelite convent of Lisieux at the age of fifteen and died nine years later, rose out of total obscurity to be one of the most widely venerated saints of all time.

Therese was a singing soul — "*une âme chantante*" — said Dom Godefroy Madelaine. When, forty years after her death, the surviving sisters, all of advanced age, sought to summon up their memories of their convent's saint, they always recollected first the "angel's eye"; her wondrously beautiful, unforgettable smile.

This is what has proved to be so infectious and deceptive about St. Therese: infectious, because no saint has ever been so quickly canonized and so universally acclaimed and loved; deceptive, because no saint has ever been so profoundly misunderstood. To some she was a sweet, delicate, sugar-coated figure of sanctity, represented the world over in sweetly-smiling plaster effigies clutching a bunch of roses. To others, who claimed to have looked behind the rosy, saccharine glaze, she was a titanic saint, a rod of steel more than a "little flower," an archetype of the bold revolutionary.

Ida Göerres rejects both the new and the old portraits as exaggerations fabricated to meet the changing taste of the public. She examines the sources once again, carefully studies the authentic manuscripts of Therese of Lisieux's writings which have only recently been made available, revises her original study first published in Germany in 1944, and gives us what may well be the finest instance of hagiography in the history of spiritual writing. It would, in fact, be a mistake to relegate Ida Göerres' book to the shelf of pious lives of the saints. It is an acute psychological and historical study of ab-

sorbing interest to anyone concerned with the power and the glory of the human personality, touched and gradually dominated by grace.

That, incidentally, happens to be the first thing we learn from the author's objective view of Therese: that God is the agent of sanctity. He takes the initiative, He sanctifies. The spiritual life is His affair not ours. We must become holy in His way, at His pace, in His good time, under the direction of His Spirit.

God does not sanctify a person in the abstract or in isolation but in the context of nature, of the universe. Ida Göerres is keenly aware of this as she reviews with meticulous precision and extraordinary insight the complete personality of Therese. She does this incisively, comprehensively, and reverently. The portraits of people are remarkable. Firmly but fairly she probes the strength and weaknesses in the Martin family. She opens the cloistered world of Carmel and reveals the stark drama behind convent walls, the tension between personalities, the daily details of conventual life. She analyzes everything against the background of the pietistic and jansenistic 19th century in which Therese lived.

The eminent German author does not rush in where angels fear to tread. She does not attempt to solve what is insoluble. She does not try to unveil the essentially and rightfully hidden features of *the hidden face*. The judgments she does make are never perfunctory but thorough and balanced, shedding new light on old problems: the editing of the original manuscripts; the neurotic tendency of the saint; the characters of Mother Agnes and Mother Mary Gonzague; the nature of the saint's achievement and message, her "little way," and



the value of suffering and aridity. The work is an amazing blend of scholarship and common sense, a major—perhaps incomparable—contribution to Theresian literature.

An interesting point—and significant where an appraisal of any study of Therese is concerned—is the fact that, thus far, there has been complete unanimity of enthusiastic approval for Ida Göerres' *Hidden Face* on the part of Carmelite nuns. "This is unbelievably real and objective," they say.

A heartening fruit of her study is that Therese becomes more than ever, the model of sanctity for "the man on the street." As the author points out: "Aside from the romantic aspect of the nun's costume . . . there is nothing but a routine life of the most commonplace sort; a life of a small group living at close quarters, with all its inevitable tensions; complete submission to a rather unedifying regime; monotonous work that is never self-chosen and that provides mind and emotions with neither nourishment nor diversion. Surprising as it may seem, all this results, within the frame-

work of an apparently special and extraordinary existence, in a cross-section of the standard life of the masses, of "little people." Here are the narrow, restricted, dreary and dependent conditions of real poverty. Here is the commonplace scene of petty and dull toil."

So, in spite of habit and veil and all the guilt daubed over the "Little Flower," ordinary people recognized her as *their* saint, recognized, too, divine approval and presence in their own little lives. That is the crowning glory of the life of St. Therese thrown into splendid *bas relief* by Mrs. Göerres. For to endure, to overcome and to profit by this life itself, this network of limiting factors which we cannot alter, this commonplace life so barren of ideals, so shabby and thwarted—that was Therese's task.

To make us compellingly aware of this, by strong arguments couched in glorious language—that was Ida Göerres' task, exquisitely executed.

—FATHER WILLIAM, O.C.D.  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

**MRS. CHRISTOPHER**, by Elizabeth Myers, introduction by Gerald Vann, O.P., Sheed and Ward, New York, N. Y., 1959, 238 pp., \$3

*Mrs. Christopher* makes her debut wearing orchids (selection of the Thomas More Book Club, designation "A Thomas More Book to Live," an Introduction by Father Gerald Vann, O.P.)! Mrs. Christopher herself opens the action of the novel on the first page. She, a middle-aged English widow of means and gracious integrity, stands before a blackmailer in his London office. She and three other victims also present, are being blackmailed—with malice, but with sneers and leers as well. Presently our Mrs. Christopher coolly, deliberately, draws a little revolver from her handbag and kills the blackmailer with one bullet through his

brain. This immediately releases the blackmailer's other three victims and herself from his unpleasant demands. All are free to walk out of the office, back into their private lives. All do so. The novel then plays out the drama of each life.

There is the unemployed rebel schoolmaster in love with a streetwalker in Soho; the shabby doctor, irritable and harrassed by debts for the support of a sick brother in Camden; and the beautiful girl who has run away from a titled husband to a temperamental lover in South Kensington. All are caught in the terrible problem of meaninglessness. Flotsam and jetsam of the dehumanized

culture of our time, they are Eliot's "hollow men," contributors to that mysterious force forming today at the heart of things, the lostness, the "Wasteland" of the modern soul. These characters mislead themselves into grave wrongs by reason of the starved affections of their hearts and souls. Mrs. Myers pleads with us not to shrink; to rise to the challenge and to think on these things! That they are the present sorrows of Christ's Heart.

In his Introduction Father Vann recalls the statement of Dostoevsky in *The Brothers Karamazov*: "Everyone is really responsible to all men for all and everything." Mrs. Myers is no Dostoevsky and her central character, Mrs. Christopher, the mouthpiece of her novel, is but a whisper of that great affirmation we seek in the greatest literature. Nevertheless her novel must, I think, be considered a significant work at a profound level. True, she answers none of its questions and solves none of its suffering. That is for us to do. Art may be implicit as well as explicit. In making the effort to examine and reflect on the confusions and futilities in its pages, though the actual understanding gained may seem to be meager, yet surely the effort made must bring grace; an extension be it ever so little, in Christ, because He so

loves these, His unknowing children.

This is the reward our generation seeks, and desires. We have come a long way. F. O. Matthiessen, discussing spiritual values in his study *American Renaissance*, takes note of the Italian scene in Hawthorne's *Marble Faun*, where Miriam, overwhelmed with horror at herself confesses to Hilda the murder she has led Donatello to commit up in the mountains. Hilda's response is only dread that she may be contaminated by her dearest friend's guilt. She even fears that she might violate a spiritual law by speech with her. Miriam pleads: "Be more my friend than ever, for I need you more." But Hilda recoils, a "perfect, bleached prototype of the genteel tradition." (F. O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance: art and expression in the age of Emerson and Whitman*, Oxford University Press, N. Y., 1941, p. 357.) Today we are rather moved to remember the words of St. John of the Cross, "Where there is no love put love and you will find love." That is what Mrs. Christopher has to say to us. In her own way, of course. I think she says it well, that she deserves those orchids.

—MARY KIELY  
Providence, R. I.

**MY BELOVED: The Story of a Carmelite Nun**, by Mother Catherine Thomas of Divine Providence, D.C. Publishers: (Hard Cover) McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 252 pp., \$4.75. (Paperback) Doubleday Doran, Inc., New York, 75 cents

"In your religion and in your philosophy, if you do not have mirth you will certainly have madness." Chesterton's summary is perfect. Had he been a Carmelite, he would have echoed St. Teresa's fervent prayer: "Lord, preserve me from sour saints!" Should anyone entertain the notion that life behind Carmelite enclosure walls stultifies mental growth, to say nothing about spiritual

growth, *My Beloved* by Mother Catherine Thomas, D. C. is the book for him. You simply cannot laugh in a state of petrification, and the experiences of Mother Catherine Thomas as a Carmelite Nun go a long way toward disproving the legend that laughter in religion is hollow, a "brave little smile" at best.

Not that Mother Catherine Thomas goes out of her way to be funny. Her

humor is spontaneous and wholesome and extremely contagious, the perfect setting for serious discussion concerning the value of the contemplative life in Carmel.

For the author's purpose in writing the book is to attract vocations, and to do this it was necessary first of all to prove that the Church has placed a seal of sanction upon strict contemplative life from time immemorial.

Just recently the question was raised in a popular Catholic magazine: will the Church suppress the contemplative Orders in the 21st century because of being no longer of use in the apostolate of Catholic Action (implying that the Church adapts herself to the needs of the time)? Without anticipating the Church's decision in the least and acknowledging full submission to her demands, there is little likelihood that contemplative Orders will be suppressed by the 21st century. Papal pronouncements during the past 10 years command all religious to concentrate upon their interior lives as being first in importance. Contemplative Religious are asked especially to participate in the apostolic life

of the Church by means of good example, prayer, and penance. Pope Pius XII insisted over and over that contemplative Nuns should study their Rule, "to know what they are and love what they are." That love will be expansive and include the whole world in a redemptive life of charity. Such exhortations do not sound as though the Popes think the contemplative life is drawing its last painful breath before expiring. They know the dead are no longer under the jurisdiction of the Church!

And so, Mother Catherine Thomas, in her splendid summary of the vitality of Carmel, provides us with proof from personal experience that a Carmelite Nun with a genuine vocation develops spiritually, mentally, and psychologically. And that is why Carmelites smile so easily. Inner serenity always smiles. It radiates the joy of Christ.

A group of interesting pictures taken inside the Oklahoma Carmel where the author resides are found in the middle of the book. It is available in the Image Book series for 75 cents.

**TERESA OF AVILA**, by Marcelle Auclair, translated from the French by Kathleen Pond. Publishers: (Hard Cover) Pantheon Books, Inc., New York, 457 pp., \$4.95. (Paperback) Doubleday Doran, Inc., New York, 480 pp., \$1.35

The exception proves the rule. Here is a book that can almost be judged by the cover. Just as there is nothing exaggerated about the title, so there is careful adherence to the theme in the pages that follow. Marcelle Auclair presents *Teresa of Avila* as a vibrant personality, a born organizer, Foundress, mystic, saint, a person refreshingly human because so eminently holy.

The author had the unique privilege of inspecting the cloisters of Spanish Discalced Carmels, and she was extremely assiduous in gathering her background materials from the best Carmelite sources,

notably the works of Father Silverio, O.C.D. The attractive personality of Teresa, enhanced by God's grace, is regarded from the standpoint of her magnificent growth in true womanliness. Under an unskilled pen, such a theme could have shot wide of the mark. But the interplay of nature and grace in the life of St. Teresa is underscored in this book with a touch of true artistry, and St. Teresa comes alive with extraordinary vitality.

Nevertheless, the style is definitely French, vaguely reminiscent of Mauriac's impressionistic prose. The sentences are



twift, in keeping with the rapid movement of the narrative. But the drama of Teresa's friendship with God, her growth in charity and mystic contemplation, are made prominent by hurried suggestions that lack the Mauriac depth, and this results in some of St. Teresa's greatest graces being missed altogether by the reader. God works in the twinkling of an eye, but the human mind needs time to assimilate and interpret the meaning of God's action in the life of a saint. On the whole, the movement is too rapid to allow time for meditation, and this is regrettable in such a well-written volume as this when the saint happens to be Teresa.

However, as history rather than meditation, the biography is surprisingly accurate with the exception of two very minor points open to dispute. For one thing, it is highly doubtful that Teresa refers to her own youthful romance when speaking of her adolescent frivolities. Her best interpreters agree that the romance was her cousin's, with Teresa an interested spectator. Again, years later, St. Teresa in a vision received solemn assurance from Our Lord Himself that Father Gratian was to be her spiritual guide as well as her collaborator in the Reform of Carmel. Spiritual Directors hold the place of God for the penitent soul, and it was Gratian's capacity as Director more than his charm and understanding that Teresa found so inviting that she willingly opened her soul to him. When introducing Gratian into the biography, the emphasis is faulty and beside the point, though the author is properly reverent when developing the relationship between St. Teresa and her beloved Father Gratian.

Except for these two minor exceptions, the theme rings true. When Teresa discovered that human love could not satisfy, she determined to seek God's love above all else. Attention is focused on Teresa's womanliness, her womanly need to love and be loved, which makes her

towering personality warm and believable in this account of her life. The key factor in the Saint's spiritual development was determination. "I *determined* to do this . . . I *resolved* to do that . . . I *made up my mind* . . ." Anyone who makes a decision has already gone far, and when a rationalist like Descartes could admit that "Happiness is an act of the will," how much more when the happiness is supernatural? Once resolved, Teresa's "pride of honor," as she called it, forced her never to turn back. In short, Carmel's Mother was a spiritual aristocrat in the best sense of the word, but not a snob. Her friends are always better for having known her, even today.

To Marcelle Auclair's everlasting credit, we have here the biography of a saint and not a pious commentary. There is not so much as a single devotional exhortation of the author's own, a temptation few women can resist. The life of St. Teresa is allowed to speak for itself, in the Saint's own words for the most part, and that life speaks of the glory of God. If, as Carlyle once said, a well-written life is even rarer than a well-spent one, Marcelle Auclair comes close to producing that rare thing recognizable as a true work of art.

Incidentally, anyone with this reviewer's insatiable curiosity about reading footnotes will be thoroughly frustrated at the numerous initials found on the bottom of each page. Who would ever guess that CTA means *Letters*, or CH means *The Life of Blessed Anne of St. Bartholomew*? By actual count, there are 79 combinations of such initials!

The \$4.95 edition published by Pantheon is also available for \$1.35 in the Image Book series. The Pantheon publication is illustrated with photographs taken within the Carmelite Convents of Spain.

—A RELIGIOUS OF REGINA COELI  
CARMEL  
Bettendorf, Iowa



**THIS IS YOUR TOMORROW . . . AND TODAY**, by M. Raymond, O.C.S.O., The Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee, 1959, 207 pp., \$3.95

So much has been written lately about that scourge of the twentieth century — cancer. Many prominent men have undergone surgery in the hope of arresting or removing the deadly growth; the press has followed carefully and in detail the medical history involved. This book is in the line of histories of carcinoma but with what a difference!

Charlie Flanagan, father of seven ("the oldest just entering her teens, the youngest still teething"), is found to have inoperable cancer of the lung during exploratory surgery. His older brother, the Trappist author Fr. Raymond, is given the poignant task of breaking the news to Charlie when he visits Gethsemani. Although Charlie says simply, "Joe, I'm not afraid to die. But Kay and the kids . . ." his older brother can detect his fright and his bewilderment. As a penance after a general confession, Fr. Raymond gives the injunction to "live gloriously" and recommends that Charlie say only the glorious mysteries from then on. He must always look ahead, even as far as the white light of eternity.

At Gethsemani, Charlie got the idea. "You want me to fly high, don't you?" Through his brother's letters he is instructed and upheld in the ordeal which is to follow. Charlie is gently led to see that the Glorious Mysteries are to become "incarnate" again in him. As the frightful parasite gnaws at his vitality, his spirit corresponds ever more fully to the Divine promptings. Charlie comes to provide, in the beautiful phrase of Sr. Elizabeth of the Trinity, "another humanity," and though he writes that he does "not know what he'll do if and when the going gets real rough," the reader is left marvelling at the power of grace in a pliable soul. When mustard

gas treatments arrest the growth in the lung but send it to the legs, and Charlie is forced to admit, "I walk around in pain, I sit down in pain, I lie down in pain," it is "every man's *Summa Theologica*," the rosary, that provides a sustaining euphoria of soul.

Loss of energy accompanying cancer must be offset by increased spiritual intake. Only the most potent of spiritual thoughts can get Charlie over the hump, the nights when he knew "it was God's plan" and yet he had to confess that he was tired of so much pain. Eventually he reached the point where he could write — "If I feel too well, I become less adoring."

As the cancer progresses relentlessly, even to the "eating up" of two bones in the foot, the reader becomes aware of what he has been witnessing, that which "angels worship: the hand of God and the hands of the Mother of God pressing the soul of a Christian man into the mold of Christ." At forty-seven, after eighteen months of prayerful suffering and spiritual growth, Charlie died on the silver anniversary of his brother's priesthood. He had fulfilled his penance well.

This book should bring much comfort to many; not only to those in a state similar to Charlie's, but also to those in mortal terror of carcinoma — and they are legion. If Fr. Raymond is still hesitant (as mentioned in the preface) about his prudence in "letting outsiders into the loving intimacy of his own family," let him be reassured. Readers will handle this book with reverence and they will be grateful that he broke his Trappist silence to speak about such grace-filled days. The book fills a long-felt need.

— JUNE VERBILLION  
Oak Park, Ill.

**THE LITTLE BREVIARY**, Newman Press, Westminster, Md., 1959, 245 pp., \$15

On what meat does our modern man feed, that he has grown so strong? This is the question we shall be asking once this *Little Breviary* gets around and used.

It contains, in English, in simplified form, all the offices of the *Roman Breviary*. So it is a real Office, yet no longer than the *Little Office of Our Lady*. It keeps to the plan of the canonical Hours, except that Matins always has only one nocturn, consisting of three Psalms with their antiphons and three lessons.

The *Little Breviary* is a faithful re-

production of the *Roman Breviary* and preserves that great variety which helps to hold the attention and maintain recollection. The wide use of Msgr. Knox's translation makes it very readable.

Anyone who recites the *Little Breviary* regularly places himself in continual contact with Holy Scripture and with the spirit of the Church, which ever lives in the liturgy.

—FATHER WILLIAM, O.C.D.  
Milwaukee, Wis.

**CHRIST AT EVERY CROSSROAD**, by F. Desplanques, S.J., The Newman Press, Westminster, Md., 125 pp., \$2.75

**JESUS OUR MODEL**, by L. Colin, C.S.S.R., Regnery, Chicago, 143 pp., \$3.50

Father Desplanques won the undying admiration of countless strivers after perfection some years ago with his masterful *Living the Mass*. It was such an unusually good book, so unique, that one could hardly imagine another like it. But here is another from the pen of the same gifted author, and it is almost as remarkable as its predecessor.

As the title implies, this is a consideration of Christ in our lives. But it is no ordinary consideration. It has an immediacy, a throbbing reality, a persuasiveness and a sense of honesty that make it most powerful. Father's direct, conversational style; his knowledge, so discerning, so sympathetic, of the world of 1959; his deep awareness of the dynamism of Christ—all of these send the message of this book straight to where we live.

If the urgency of Christ's message no longer stirs you as it should, if you fail to feel Christ's presence at your work

or in your home, if you're bogged down in the thousand and one trivial matters of daily living, then this is just the book for you. It really is the book for everyone, for everyone needs Christ and this brings the real Christ directly to us.

A great deal of enthusiasm has been generated recently by the translation of Fr. Colin's works into English. From this quarter it would seem that enthusiasm is a rather strong reaction, for these works of Fr. Colin are not spiritual "blockbusters." However, his books are certainly deserving of admiration, and that is particularly true of the present volume. Slender though it is, this book represents a thorough and practical treatment of the spiritual life, in which the unifying theme is the imitation of Christ. Many, very many, have treated this theme of the imitation of Christ before, but Fr. Colin has something new to offer: he skillfully weaves this theme through the tough, worn fabric of day-

to-day living; he gives eminently practical suggestions; he recommends specific practices and programs.

There is a wealth of Scriptural and dogmatic underpinning here; there is a style at once clear and inviting; there

are short, digestible chapters. All this makes for a solid addition to anyone's collection of "books to live by."

—PATRICK M. McNAMARA, O.S.M.  
Milwaukee, Wis.

**THE ENEMIES OF LOVE**, by Dom Aelred Watkin, P. J. Kenedy and Sons, New York, 1958, 118 pp.

*The Enemies of Love* is a masterful work dealing with problems rarely treated even in a secular vein and surely not often from a religious standpoint. It is a book sorely needed by many ages and classes of people, but especially parents and spiritual advisers. It seems that the latter have been convinced by Madison Avenue and Hollywood propaganda that the only problem facing those in love (for such are the main subject of the work, although the author does deal with different types of human affection) is temptations regarding sex. (This is not to incriminate them, because the whole of civilization itself has been deceived to a point where love is pictured only as romance.) In great measure these temptations are perhaps the most important of problems because of the question of sin, but there are obstacles much more subtle and more more soul-searing to be encountered. Into these Dom Watkin has a keen insight and an understanding one would not look for from a priest, because of what would seem the necessity for an experiential perception. His little vignettes between Hilary and Vivian (names used because each can denote the male or the female) are inescapably true to life. Yet somehow the great majority of writers have evaded dealing with the suffering occasioned by love as experienced.

The answer to the problems of love herein discussed: anxiety, jealousy, possessiveness, self-indulgence, false romance, unrequited love, loneliness in love and the death of love is not an easy

answer and not a cure-all. It is basic, though, to Dom Watkin's central theme that human love, if truly love, is an expression of God's love. And thus the only way to cope with the obstacles that confront it is not to withdraw and try to find shelter from pain, but rather to give more, to love more.

This is truly a spiritual book; the lovers are not going to find what they are seeking if they are seeking easy answers that will put all things right; there are no panaceas. Perhaps those in the throes of the suffering Dom Watkin depicts would be grateful for a few suggested subterfuges, but these are not within the theme of the book. Subterfuges look to getting, to being loved. True love looks to giving, to loving. Not that Dom Watkin is unrealistic—he goes into the problem of the requital of love. Love, it is true, yearns to be returned, but love itself cannot demand love in return. Love is a free gift and cannot be required, even of those bound by the ties of marriage.

Another main thesis of the book is that love presents a very real challenge and, hence, must be worked at. Too often this is lost sight of and understandably so. The many media of communication present love as something that just happens. Attraction happens, a special insight into the personality of another happens, the beginnings happen, but the fullness of love needs to be created, moulded and nourished. Here is one very practical point that the author takes pains to bring out.

The great value of the book lies in this, however, that Dom Watkin portrays love as an expression of the divine life. It is not something separate, not something that lies in a realm all of its own between the natural and the supernatural, but something that is highest in man's ultimate fulfillment. Thus love in itself is a perfection of man. In some cases it is meant to be returned, for such is the rightful fulfillment of love. However, as Dom Watkin says, love with no return in this life is love in its fundamental form. For then love is nothing but giving and the more complete the gift, the more like to God's complete gift in the Trinity. And, even in the natural order, the more we love the better equipped we are to love in new situations and the more ready we are to receive love.

In the last chapter, "The Triumph of Love," Dom Watkin investigates the realities of love on the natural, but more

specifically on the supernatural level with great attention to the Sacraments. Thus, not only the difficulties are discussed in this work, but also the helps which conduce to the final perfection of love.

As before, there are no everyday panaceas in the book, but the only answer to the dilemmas posed by love is given here. That the problems have been faced is a major victory and a great stride toward an understanding where understanding was lacking. And an open discussion of "the enemies of love" is a step forward for them who must face such obstacles and those who must be ready with counsel. Further, an idealistic and mature portrayal of love is what must be held up to a materialistic and deluded populace and such a picture is the whole impact of this work.

—MARY ANN BEATTIE  
Grosse Pointe, Mich.

**FINDING GOD IN ALL THINGS:** Essays in Ignatian Spirituality, translated by William Young, S.J., Henry Regnery Company, Chicago, 276 pp., \$4.50

This collection of articles from the French quarterly *Christus* will need no recommendation for any reader of that thoughtful review edited and published by the Fathers of the French Provinces of the Society of Jesus. Father Young has chosen to translate seventeen selections from the first twelve numbers, the earliest of which appeared in January, 1954. He notes in his introduction that the editors felt St. Ignatius would have loved our times, and that its "peculiar temper would have found his message particularly opportune," although, indeed—as Father Young does not say—his message has already sounded so to almost every age since it was expressed in the *Spiritual Exercises* some five hundred years ago. The editors wished, he adds, "to manifest once more the unlimited

variety of grace in a common fidelity to the all-embracing love of God." To this end they planned to discuss the spirituality of St. Ignatius, with the events in his life which formed it, the currents of scripture and tradition behind it, and its apostolic bearing. The review was not to be "scholarly" in any narrow sense, though its tone was to be intellectual. The editors hoped that "without any surrender of the spiritual content," they could present old truths in a new dress to a "reading public that has become more educated in the course of a generation or two."

The essays are grouped in five sections, headed: God, His Glory, Love and Service; Christ and His Mother; The Problem of Prayer and Action; The Discernment of Spirits, and Characteristic



Ignatian Virtues. The doctrine and spirit will be happily familiar to anyone who has made the exercises. The style and approach differ rather widely among the twelve writers represented, of whom Maurice Giuliani appears three times, and Henri Holstein, Paul Agaesse and Francois Charmot twice. The section on Christ and His Mother has the largest number of entries — five — with four devoted to part I, two to part IV, and three to parts III and V. In all sections, both texts and notes are generous in their reference to the spiritual experience of Ignatius himself, and to the commentaries on and clarification of the *Spiritual Exercises* by such early Fathers of the Society as Faber, Nadal, and Laynez.

Father Giuliani's essay, which opens the group, and which gives its title to the collection, might well appear in the section on prayer and action, since it is a study of how Ignatius by experience worked out his theory of their relation. Yves Raguin's "God's Glory and Apostolic Activity" points out the danger of separating the glory of God and the glory of the Church, which "are only one glory perceived from two different points of view," and then discusses the apostolic life as an attempt to make the Glory of God come out of the misery of the world. To achieve this, the apostle must often go the way of pain and failure, but these are a sharing in Christ's pain and failure, and from them springs the glory. Father Donatien Mollat traces Christ's progressive revelation of Himself to Ignatius, and Father Holstein explains and defends the Ignatian method of contemplation. The paper "Knowing Christ," by Father Agaesse, suggests that we feel "a twofold movement of attraction and repulsion," when we place ourselves in the presence of Christ, and even adds that "whosoever has not felt this conflict between the demands of Christ and his [own] sinful inclinations

has not entered into true knowledge." Repulsion is always present because of the sinfulness of man and the holiness of God, and it is illusion to ignore the necessity of progressive purification if one is to progress in prayer. Father Holstein's paper on "True Love for Our Lady" may also arouse repulsion in some readers, since he speaks strongly against the childish (as distinguished from child-like) and the selfish approach to devotion to her. Some Marian literature, he says, underplays the mediation of Christ in stressing the mediation of Mary. Mary's mediation is far from being a "pious metaphor," but Christ is the unique Mediator, and Mary dispenses the treasures He has acquired for us. At the end of his paper, which calls for a more theological devotion to Mary, Father Holstein disclaims any desire for "an intellectualism which is somewhat disdainful of the naïve piety of 'good Christians.'" Our devotion to Mary must be simple, but *truth* and simplicity, he insists, are not exclusive of each other.

The "characteristic Ignatian virtues" treated are obedience (of course!), mortification, abnegation and joy. The last two are treated together, and this is a key to the whole discussion of the virtues, which presents them always as an imitation of the actions of Christ.

This book is more directed, I think, toward priests and religious than toward lay readers. The papers on the discernment of spirits, for instance, are for directors and superiors. But some of the papers would be very helpful also to lay people, particularly the papers on prayer and activity and Father Holstein's on devotion to Our Lady.

Father Young's translation is nearly always good, although he is too reluctant to break down into the English idiom the sometimes involved French constructions, and rather too often the meaning of a sentence emerges only after one has disentangled the grammar.

However, this is the occasional danger of even the best translation, and readers of this volume will feel too grateful to Father Young for having placed this excellent series of studies at their dis-

posal to cavil at his occasional infelicities.

— C. E. MAGUIRE, R.S.C.J.  
Newton College, Mass.

**CHRISTIAN HUMANISM**, by Louis Bouyer, translated by A. V. Little-dale, The Newman Press, Maryland, 1958, 110 pp., \$2.50

"Religion is natural to man, but equally naturally his religion tends to idolatry." Christianity in the first place is an act of faith in creation which by its very existence pays homage to the goodness, wisdom and power of the Creator. Witness the first chapter of Genesis. And yet, Christianity is also the Cross which is a scandal to the Jews and a stumbling block to the Gentiles. It is in his typical dialectic of opposites that Fr. Bouyer treats chapter by chapter of such subjects as creation and the Cross, dependence and freedom, intellect and faith, tradition and renewal, action and contemplation, self-development and asceticism.

One finds many thought-provoking ideas, well-expressed. Dependence on God is not the rejection but rather the achievement of true freedom. The harmony between religious revelation and science is not to be solved by concordism or even by any human means, but only by the Christian faith, the mystery of Christ and his Cross. Although loyalty to tradition demands that the mind of man renounce and transcend itself; it will ultimately fulfill itself in faith, which is the only true renewal of the human

intellect. Contemplation, by freeing us from the world, gives us while still in the world the sole means of saving it, while saving ourselves. "To decide in favour of being man rather than Christian means in the end, to be against man. To decide for Christianity, even if it is apparently against being human, means simply to decide for the death of the old man as a preliminary for the birth of the new."

Although this book contains an appearance of a balanced viewpoint, it is typical of Fr. Bouyer's one-sided eschatological thinking. The human side of all these solutions are minimized far too much in this reviewer's opinion. Secondly, although Fr. Bouyer's style is very stimulating, it frequently does not resolve itself into tangible conclusions. Fr. Bouyer's treatment of Christian Humanism should be read by anyone seriously interested in this subject. Its great merit is to be a prophetic warning lest Christian Humanism degenerate into a pagan naturalism. However, the proper appreciation of human values in the supernatural order is not to be found here.

— PAUL B. STEINMETZ, S.J.  
St. Mary's College, Kansas

**DOCTRINE AND LIFE SERIES** (Paperback), Newman, Westminster, Md.

1. *The Spiritual Genius of St. Therese*, by Jean Guittou, 1958, 90 cents
2. *Lead Kindly Light*, from the works of J. H. Newman, 1958, 90 cents
3. *The Love We Forget*, by M. R. Loew, O.P., 1958, 90 cents

*The Spiritual Genius of St. Therese* by Guittou gives the reasons for Therese's immortal rank as a spiritual giant. Throwing a new light on her sanctity, this

booklet of the *Doctrine and Life Series* by Newman Press explains, among many things, her feeling that this life is precious and enviable, the repugnance to

God of human suffering, and her desire to spend her heaven doing good on earth.

Therese's anti-Jansenism smiles through the bleak 19th century French spiritual scene. Her love of action for God is in violent contrast to Quietism and its cowardly retreat from this world.

Nowhere in this booklet is there the aroma of rose petal piety some writers portray as the essence of the Little Way.

*Lead Kindly Light* is an appropriate title for a unified booklet of excerpts from Newman's sermons and books dealing with a 'reasoned approach to faith.'

Smooth enough in form to have been done in this order by Newman himself there are four chapters: "Conscience," "Revelation," "The Church," and "The Choice." This edition is designed primarily for those on the threshold of the Catholic Church in need of a compact

book to clarify the main issues, engender a proper attitude, and dispose the reader to follow the suggested lines of thought.

*The Love We Forget* is from a series of Lenten addresses over French TV by Father Loew O.P., a convert. Designed to break indifference to the Gospel message of God's wonderful love for us and its meaning in our lives, Father Loew maintains that we see the parcel of Christianity and need only to undo its wrapping.

As you might expect, he uses simple words and illustrations to tell us of the God who comes to give us eternal life in the face of constant rebuffs. He says that God is happy to search for man and God's fullest happiness is in the moment when we let him catch us.

—J. B. Sisson  
Loras College  
Dubuque, Iowa

### THE PARISH from Theology to Practice, by Hugo Rahner, S.J., editor, Newman, Westminster, Md.

This reviewer is a pastor for six, a priest for almost twenty years. Not yet has he read as helpful a "homily" on pastoral theology as the present volume. It should be remembered that *The Parish* assembles a series of lectures recently given to the eager seminarians at the Canisium in Innsbruck. Seminary Father Robert Kress, the translator, himself an alumnus of St. Meinrad Seminary, has done his work well to make the book vibrantly alive.

So eager am I to "sell" this book to every other pastor and brother priest that I can do little else than re-echo Augustine's young friend: "Take up and read."

Here we have a short volume which at the same time brings us the well shaped thinking of such men as Fathers Karl and Hugo Rahner, and Joseph Jungmann. It is not hard to imagine how well these men and their associates can put the parish community into the challenge-

frame of today. The parish is discussed in its role of establishing "placeness" for the Mystical Body of Christ, especially when the Body becomes "event" in the celebration of the Eucharistic Mystery (chapter 3).

All the more practical is the thinking of the authors because their every consideration is rooted in the validity and experience of history: from the New Testament to the Mid-Twentieth century.

The authors consider how the "Life of the Spirit" in the parish, generated and renewed by the Liturgy, moves the people of God to a full acceptance of their missionary role in Christian society.

Here is a book to help and encourage shepherds, bishops and priests, in their efforts to understand the role of their flocks in meeting the lively challenges encountering the Church in our day!

—REV. ALFRED LONGLEY  
St. Richard's, Minn.



**THE SACRIFICE OF THE MYSTICAL BODY**, by Rev. Eugene Masure, translated by Anthony Thorold, Regnery, Chicago, 1st English ed., 1954, 158 pp., cloth, \$3.50

On the inside front of the jacket for Masure's latest work translated into English, we read the following:

*"The Sacrifice of the Mystical Body can be read with lasting profit by anyone who has an affectionate familiarity with the Missal and the teachings of the Church."*

Such a statement, undoubtedly prompted by the author's own foreword, betrays either an ignorance of the text or an uncommon and exaggerated notion of "affectionate familiarity." This work is quite exclusively for theologians.

Whereas Father Clifford Howell's work on the Mass may well be remembered as the great popularization of the Mystery in our day, so Masure's study certainly deserves consideration as the finest theological work of our generation. His study of the *gesture* (the central action of the Mass, transubstantiation), the *rite* (the external figures surrounding this action), their *relation* to one another and to the Sacrifice of the Cross evidences the pene-

trating scholarship and theological progress which we have learned to look for in the European masters.

Similarly, his examination of the origins of the Eucharist is based on his substantial knowledge of the Scriptures, early manuscripts and works of the Church Fathers. His familiarity with Jewish customs and sacrificial concepts brings new understanding to the Last Supper as well as a new foundation for the doctrine of the Real Presence.

These two sections, on the *essence* of the Sacrifice and the *origins* of the Mass, make up the whole of Masure's study. *The Sacrifice of the Mystical Body* is a continuation and completion of the author's earlier Eucharistic study, *The Christian Sacrifice* (N. Y., Kenedy & Sons, 1947). Almost certainly, it will take its place among the truly great and significant works on the Eucharist. It will certainly never become one of the popular ones.

—REV. JOHN R. GILBERT  
Monticello, Minn.

**TO THE OTHER TOWNS**, by William V. Bangert, S.J., Newman Press, Westminster, Md., 1959

*To the Other Towns* is a new biography of one of the first companions of St. Ignatius Loyola, with whom he founded the Society of Jesus. It will be an important book, the reviewer feels, for any reader who catches its special lesson in the business of human relations. We hear a good deal these days about an I-Thou philosophy, or about a "direct" love of persons, or about an improved awareness between persons and within groups which psychologists promise in connection with various new central ideas. Blessed Peter Favre, S.J. knew the secret of all this and he practiced what he knew, and that is

the importance of his life and his biography. It is not just that he knew and practiced what the author of this book, following Pere de Guibert, terms the Ignatian mystique of service through love. What is more important for the reader is that Favre's life, with its special features, seems to throw a clear penetrating light on what *kind* of love it was he had, and how he sustained and developed it.

The world is desolate because man does not think in his heart, says *Ecclesiasticus*, and it was notably the reflective character of Peter Favre that fostered



and fed his love for so many people. After his experience of people and his love for them had deepened in the course of a bewildering succession of new scenes of endeavor, what more natural than that his mind and heart should be altered by the mere fact of approaching a new city or town or country. As he walked along, his mind was sensitively and imaginatively alive to the problems and needs of the inhabitants and his heart was already imploring the intercession of their angel guardians and patron saints.

Did the travels of Peter Favre contribute to the element of "detachment" in his love for his fellow men? What is "detachment"? When Favre was about to leave Portugal for Spain in March, 1545, he wrote a letter of farewell to his cherished younger brethren at Coimbra, including the Belgians whom he had himself admitted into the Society. He wrote: "Let us each one of us learn to seek himself and his brother in Christ, the Source of all we are. Let us look for each other, contemplate each other in Him Who is our Origin, our Cause, our First Principle." (p. 228) These words constitute a sort of formula of love and it may be argued that the travels of Favre, if they did not teach him this formula, at least helped to drive home the lesson.

Favre knew, as we all can know, that it is possible to regard people with a reverence and love analogous to that which we have for God Himself, because

of their intimate and continuous dependence on God for all that they are and do. It is possible that such a love be the wellspring of one's every action and gesture. But this kind of love does not grow on every tree, it is too variously and insidiously easy to lapse into a state of *using* people as *things*, without the slightest suspicion of what one is doing, a state wherein love means merely, "you are very serviceable to me, a great comfort to me, it is nice to have you around." So a real *detachment* is needed to preserve real love in its pure strength. Might it not be that the fascinating love of Peter Favre for people which so won them as to make of him a veritable Pied Piper wherever he went, was preserved in its purity and power by his being flicked back and forth like the stick on a metronome between Germany, Belgium and Spain, and Italy? Not for him to question the orders sending him on so many travels, but to take advantage of the paradoxical way in which these same travels would, not dissipate, but rather channel and protect, the vital forces of mind and heart which he was prepared to lavish on God and men. This good book, in the spectacle it sets forth, extends the same or a similar advantage to all of us.

— D. V. CHARLTON, S.J.  
Loyola University  
Los Angeles, Calif.

**SAINT JEAN-MARIE VIANNEY**, by Margaret Trouncer, Sheed & Ward, New York, 260 pp., \$3.95

No priest can contemplate the Curé of Ars without awe and perhaps a twinge of conscience. This "religious glory of France," as Leo XIII called him, comes to full life in Margaret Trouncer's *Saint Jean-Marie Vianney*. The quaint figure, eating his one boiled potato a day, sitting for sixteen hours a day in the confessional, sleeping only three hours a night (when the "Grappin"

wasn't tormenting him), emerges in the full dimensions of saintly stature. But he also comes forth as a man beset with the doubts and anxieties that plague all the sons of Adam, even the priestly ones.

Mrs. Trouncer (already famed for *The Nun*, a life of St. Margaret Mary, and *Saint Bernadette*), here displays her full powers of empathy. The moving sermons, the exhaustion of the confes-

sional, the miracles of nature and grace, the constant press of people (100,000 came to Ars), constitute the historical framework of this amazing man's life and work.

But it is the personality of St. John Vianney that permeates the text. Here is the touchstone of superior biography: Does the author get in the way? Or does the biography emerge clear and strong? While Msgr. Trochu's monumental study, even in its abridgement, fulfills the ideal, Margaret Trouncer's creation is every bit as vibrant and sensitive in its portrayal.

In traditional chronological arrangement, individual chapters also focus on such facets of the Curé's apostolate as his care for orphans ("He had a special compassion for orphans and widows, and created a particular atmosphere of affection when he was with them."); his preaching ("He had a gift for picturesque, original, personal phrases."); his catechizing. ("In the end the bishop declared that the children of Ars were the best instructed in the whole countryside.") And so the saga goes — mortifications, misunderstandings with his assistant, mockery and even formal complaints to the bishop from his brother priests. Whether consoled with the conversion of

a sinner or dejected by his own doubts and anxieties — and he had many, including the gnawing wish to leave Ars and join the Trappists — the Curé's eyes could twinkle and his facile wit could crackle.

Too many seminarians — and priests — have labored under the illusion that the Curé of Ars was an ignorant man, that his sanctity was somehow a substitute for knowledge. Mrs. Trouncer does a service in emphasizing that this myth of ignorance was occasioned by the Curé's lack of formal training in Latin. When he took his exams in French, his teachers were impressed by the precision and depth of his answers. He read as much as he could, at least before the days when thousands crushed into Ars for counsel and confession. He called his books "my chief treasure." If he praised any other priest, he invariably ended with the comment, "What I like particularly is that he is learned."

Here is a superb book, an incisive insight into great sanctity, a warm-as-blood portrayal of a most unusual human being. To read *Saint Jean-Marie Vianney* is to make a private retreat. It may bring another twinge of conscience. But such twinges are good for all of us.

**SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL**, by M. V. Woodgate, Newman, Westminster, Md., 136 pp., \$2.75

"The poor you have always with you," our Lord said. And it might be added, the Lord always provides a champion that their bodies be clothed, their stomachs fed, a roof put over their heads. No greater champion has the poor ever had than St. Vincent de Paul. Christ left the legacy of charity; Vincent was its foremost executor. Today in the U. S. a parish seems complete only when a local conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society has been established. Dedicated to the sick and the ill-fortuned, the largest community of religious women in the world is the Daughters of Charity,

founded by Vincent and his close friend St. Louise de Marillac. While he was as busy as Martha, Vincent was as sensitive as Mary to the play of God's grace. He once addressed the community,

"Make no mistake, my daughters. We never had a formal design for founding your Company. God alone formed it. I never thought of it. Your Sister Superior never thought of it. Accordingly, God it is of whom we can say He was the Founder of your Company, as in truth we can find no other."

This God-centered apostolicity shines brightly through the text of M. V. Wood-

gate's *Saint Vincent De Paul*. It is a moving story, something not unusual in the annals of sanctity, for a conversion of heart was the initial step. Vincent issued from peasant stock and entered the priesthood because it seemed the best route to prestige and preferment. While on a sea journey to Marseilles, he was captured by Turks and sold into slavery in Tunis. He escaped within a year's time, but his scale of values had been drastically changed. "His eyes were open now, as never before, to suffering, to the pitiliness of the world and to the agony of being defenceless."

He imbued his native charm with a spirituality that prompted him to say to his Company of Missioners, "Sometimes one sees one's listeners so moved by what one has said that they are all in tears. And at that it is one's instinct to be pleased. Vanity shoots up and will grow strong if one does not crush it and look solely for the glory of God, for which only we must work. For on any other terms we preach ourselves and not Jesus Christ."

Vincent had had dreams about establishing a school for boys. But after the Turkish episode he was intent on alleviating misery and squalor as well as ignorance. Ironically his spiritual director de Berulle encouraged him to accept a post with the affluent de Gondi's as chaplain to the family and tutor for their son. This association with the rich of France was

to provide him with the means to finance his charities. With the death of Madame de Gondi in 1625, Vincent channeled his full peasant energy into aid for the sick and poor especially at the Hotel Dieu, a hospital in Paris, and into a small band of young priests whom he gathered about himself to preach missions in Paris and the provinces. Out of the former grew the Ladies of Charity and the religious community Daughters of Charity; out of the latter, the Vincentians.

Vincent's brush with Jansenism (He had no patience with its sombre rigorism; he had founded his Company to encourage frequent confession and Communion), his role on the powerful Council of Conscience, his firm direction of the fledgling Vincentian community that was to number more than four hundred before his death in 1660, his enormous capacity for work, all these dimensions of his toil and character are limned with broad, sure strokes in Woodgate's biography.

Only a freshet of a book (it numbers a mere 136 pages), it still sweeps the reader into the France of the Bourbons, into the heart of St. Vincent de Paul. There are only snippets of Vincent's letters and sermons and remarks, but they evoke the man. And this man was *tres extraordinaire*.

—REV. FRANCIS X. CANFIELD  
Sacred Heart Seminary  
Detroit 6, Mich.

### THE MASS: Christians Around the Altar, by the Community of St. Severin, Fides, Chicago, 1958, 155 pp., \$3.25

In this "do it yourself" age in which we live, a group of priests from Paris has written another "do it yourself" book, this time on a subject as sacred as it is practical: how to pray the Mass.

"The Mass: Christians Around the Altar" is the work of the "Community of Saint Severin," the parish-priests of the Church of Saint Severin on the left bank

in one of Paris' oldest sections. "The Mass itself is rooted in one of our most common activities, the meal" is the sentence which gives the key to the book. Harkening back to the lovefeasts which Saint Paul mentions, and to the Last Supper itself, we are initiated into the fact that the Mass contains those two ideas which make every true supper convivial,



...e., communication — whether spiritual or material — and offering — likewise spiritual and material. For a supper is more than an animal act; it is a human, social act. And if the Mass is a meal, a social act, there is no question but that everyone, laymen included, have a part in it.

The second section of the book considers particular parts of the Mass, v.g., the Amen, the Sacred Signs, etc., and shows that the participation of the faithful is expressed through each least movement of the people, and each answer of the altarboy. The chapter, "A People Who Sing" will be found to be especially timely, coming as it does so soon after the legislation of the Holy See on group-singing of the liturgy.

Ever since the publishing of Pius XIII's historic encyclical *Mediator Dei*, the duty of the faithful at Mass has been clear: They don't perform the act of immolation necessary for the Holy Sacrifice, they do co-offer the Sacrifice and themselves in union with Christ and the priest. But how can we make this idea of "co-offering" intelligible to the layman? How help the layman participate in the Mass? Our priest-authors tell us the Mass is shot through with the ideas of communication and co-offering. We have the people communicating with one another, with the priest, and with Christ, and this by means of words, actions, and intentions. Co-offering the Mass we again have people, priest and Christ. This is what the people can do; the book tells them how to do it."

The reader never discovers from one cover to the other who or how many were the priests who collaborated in the work. This reviewer found no difficulty in moving from one chapter to the next, though frequently I caught myself going back over what I had just read to glean food for thought from a paragraph or sentence pregnant with implication. The singleness of purpose of the little volume leaves no doubt in one's mind that individual chapters were hashed-over in many a rectory bull-session before they ever reached the printer's desk. No ivory-towered theoreticians, these parish priests, practitioners of the Holy Sacrifice, know what the Mass means and what it does not mean to the thousands who attend their churches. This book is their attempt, a successful one in this reviewer's opinion, to make the Mass everybody's act.

Therefore, I recommend "The Mass: Christians Around the Altar" to all Catholics. Small in size (155 pages), it's even small enough to carry to Mass for some meditative Mass reading. Reading time of individual chapters is ten minutes, at most. But I must add one word of warning about the Introduction, lest it turn anyone aside from reading an otherwise well translated book; if you can make heads or tails of it, you'll accomplish something I couldn't do.

—FR. IGNATIUS, O.C.D.  
St. Florian's Parish  
Milwaukee, Wis.

**JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM**, by Dorothy Dohen, Fides, Chicago, 1958, 96 pp., \$2.50

Here is a brief, common-sense little manual of Christian perfection for the laity, style 1959. The plan Miss Dohen offers is one that integrates Love into the daily office and home routine. Prudence salts all she has to say and makes it not just workable, but very desirable,

appealing, right. She offers no devotions but one, Love of God. She sets Saint Therese before her readers as the blueprint of the manual. "People," she says, "have to grow into things and the things of grace cannot be made to appear unnatural." She endears herself to the laity



by stating that today, to be *ordinary* (according to the Christian "order") means *heroic*. The laity have long suspected this to be a fact of the day! To see it in print is very encouraging.

Miss Dohen was formerly editor of *Integrity Magazine*. Her earlier book, a

success in many languages, is *Vocation to Love*. She has written here a book for all, a book of techniques to put Love into action in the common life of the day. A superb and welcome achievement.

—MARY KIELY  
Providence, R. I.

**A GIRL AND HER TEENS**, by Father Peter-Thomas Rohrbach, O.C.D., The Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee, Wis., August, 1959, Cloth \$2.35, Paperback \$1.25, 123 pp.

This thin volume represents one more attempt toward "A Positive Program for Teen-Age Girls," in the author's own words. It is greatly needed by Catholic educators. Our American women are having definite problems in understanding their relationship to *suburbia* as well as to *urbia*; they are making the American men "she-men," because of an education which takes away much of their natural and supernatural femininity. This is the conclusion of anthropologists like Sorokin, of sociologists like David Riesmann, of psychologists like Strecker, and even of foreigners for whom the American diplomat is less "the ugly American" than are his wife and children. All this has come about in a nation whose men have fought and won two hot wars, and are now engaged in a struggle to win the cold war by warming the world with generosity.

Family life is the basis of everything, but deviations in family life can be corrected by education. In "A Girl and Her Teens" a gifted Carmelite author and retreat-master has given teen-age girls the fundamentals of that moral education that makes Christians of their boy-friends as well as of their children.

Without attempting to explore the "whys" of monism, the feminine personality, or the conflict of the sexes, Father Rohrbach has cut through the maze of blame and excuses to tell us *what can be done about it*: give our girls a clear understanding and appreciation of *love*, divine and human; of sin which hurts that love; and of sex and confession; of independence and obedience; of vocation, marriage, motherhood and Mary, all of which are tremendous helps in making a woman's heart divinely human, pure, and sweet.

This is not the last word on the revolt against femininity; it was not meant to be used as the first. But parents, teachers and teen-age girls especially will find it clear and utterly compassionate.

Anything which helps our girls become ladies is worthwhile; this thin booklet certainly is. Bruce has made it available in a beautiful paperback edition, ideal for the annual retreat at only \$1.25.

—FR. DENIS, O.C.D.  
Shrine of Mary Help of  
Christians  
Holy Hill, Wisconsin

**ALL FOR THE KING'S DELIGHT**, by Ferdinand Valentine, O.P.,  
The Newman Press, Westminster, Md., 1958, 280 pp., \$4.00

The sub-title of this work neatly circumscribes its scope and its audience: "A Treatise on Christian Chastity, principally for Religious Sisters." Yet Fr. Valentine does not hesitate to make excursions outside the self-imposed limits of chastity to what he calls the "perimeter fortifications" of friendships, work and overwork, recreation and community life. Nor does he fail to make many a practical point pertinent to all those engaged in the modern apostolate.

The author knows sisters. His experience is apparent throughout the book in the manner in which he supplements his principles with succinct comments on what he has observed.

"Religious sisters are sometimes too prone to discover Nazareth in the conventual sewing-room or laundry or kitchen, and not in the classroom, or in the up-to-date operating theatre . . . as though Our Lady were *par excellence* Queen of the Chores."

"A situation arises in which a sister whose delight has been to salute the indwelling Trinity frequently during the day finds herself living more and more with the remembrance of her friend to the exclusion of God. . . ."

Current research techniques such as tape-recorded interviews are utilized. These, when located in the text, are not always easy to follow, nor do they flow smoothly from the previous material. Pages 53-57 contain an interview with a superior on the need for detachment in friendships and here it is unfortunate that the change of speakers was not indicated by titles. There are some Anglicisms

which might perturb the American reader: a constant use of "whilst" and a sentence describing modern girls entering religion who have frequently gone "hiking on the Continent, or in the Ridings, or hitch-hiked to the Trossachs." But how minute are these items compared to the richness of the theme's presentation—the full, integral and total development of the religious sister *qua* woman!

The Sister Formation Conference, which has contributed so much in discreet encouragement along this line, would heartily endorse Fr. Valentine's note that "all available evidence goes to show that religious sisters are gradually becoming more conscious of their latent potentialities as women, and are seeking a more extensive participation in the intellectual life of the Church."

For the superior searching for ideas to lead toward eventual adjustments in community routine, this book is a windfall. Meetings of the junior professed, problems of the sister engaged in in-service training, the effect of overwork on prayer life, of the place of hobbies—all these problems are met and not bypassed. There is even a four page discussion of sleep and suggestions for relaxation. These excursions Fr. Valentine makes to illustrate what he means when he advises that the sister should organize her "whole life positively for virginal chastity," so that, creatively and confidently she may husband her beauty all for the King's delight.

— JUNE VERBILLION  
Oak Park, Ill.

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Shrine of Mary, Help of Christians  
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